Chrome Shelled Regios Volume22

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鋼殻のレギオス

CHROME SHELLED REGIOS

22 ウィンター・フォール 下

雨木シュウスケ
SYUSUKE AMAGI

ファンタジア文庫

学园都市
拥有无限未来的年轻人们的都市

「因为，这里是是充满了可能性的都市」

鋼殻のレギオス

CHROME SHELLED REGIOS

22 ウィンター・フォール 下

「不管何时都能行」

「差不多是时候大闹一场了呢」

战斗已经开始了——

谁来

谁来

谁来……握住这只手

「苏……芳……大、人……」

Chapter 4 - Each Others' Battles

Down below, endlessly advancing underground.....

Karian's steps continued moving downwards on the stairs. The sound of him stepping on the metal staircase echoed in the empty space underground.

He didn't know when the lights that illuminated the surroundings had disappeared. Now the only light source was the white ball of light ahead of him that was guiding his advance.

"Young Master....."

She should be unable to see that light source. What goal was she moving forwards for? It didn't seem like the surroundings were that dark.

Or perhaps the scene surrounding them was one that only Karian could see.

Were the guardians of the other side peering over at them? That kind of doubt couldn't help but appear.

But, Karian was completely confident that this cluster of light before him belonged to an Electronic Fairy.

He was being led.

To where?

"Young Master, are you alright?"

"It's alright, just trust me for now."

"I trust you, but....."

Karian didn't feel the confusion of Stania behind him at all. Right now he was focused fully on what was before him, and he could no longer feel other emotions. Karian only walked downwards without stopping.

Did the unnatural stairs heading down before him truly belong to this city? It made one think that it was unreliable and dangerous .

Other than the ball of light guiding him, he couldn't see anything.

Since he couldn't see downwards, he feared that if he raised his head he wouldn't be able to see the place where he first entered this place.

"Young Master....."

Stania's voice was full of anxiety. If there were a battle, then she wouldn't be very suited for the situation.

Even so, Karian still stepped on the stairs going down.

Going down without stopping.

Not long after Stania's hand seemed to have grabbed on to the clothes on Karian's back.....

"Uh."

The light disappeared.

Just as he thought this, the next light appeared.

The light spread out as if they were looking into the night sky.

This wasn't the only change.

The underground space that had oppressed the two up till now and given them a kind of enclosed feeling suddenly disappeared. It gave a kind of feeling like being released, and the presence of the metal frame that had originally surrounded them also disappeared .

The light spreading out above their heads swept away the darkness, and Stania behind him seemed to have also seen this.

"This is....."

Stania muttered.

"Can you see it too?"

"Yes..... but, what's going on?"

Hearing Stania's reply, Karian could firmly believe that the thing he saw was not a hallucination, and his heart relaxed slightly .

But, he couldn't find a clue that could correctly reply to her question.

Though he didn't have any reason to worry either.

Because after this he would be able to understand.

"Well, next....."

Karian once again looked at the surroundings.

There was no one else in this space filled with illuminated night other than Karian and Stania.

"We don't know what will happen next, I guess?"

The target of Karian's question was the light that had guided them. Even if it had disappeared without a trace, things couldn't have just ended like that.

After letting Karian and Stania see the scene in front of them, things wouldn't end like this.

Changes happened quickly.

The light once again flashed before their eyes.

"Ugh-"

Strong light made the two unable to help but use their hands to block their eyes, and through the flow of the air, Karian felt Stania stand in front of him. Stania had moved like this to guard him.

But, this blinding light didn't continue for too long. Though the light hadn't completely disappeared, it was no longer blinding to the degree where they couldn't open their eyes.

".....Who is it!?"

Stania's stern voice showed that changes had happened.

After opening his eyes, Karian saw it.

It was light.

Though it wasn't enough to force him to shut his eyes, it was still a bit blinding.

It wasn't the white light that had guided Karian, but rather blue light.

The origin of this light had taken shape and stood there.

It was a person.

No, though its external appearance was very close, it wasn't a human.

"An Electronic Fairy....."

"Eh!?"

Karian muttered, and Stania made a surprised sound when she heard it.

It wasn't Zuellni there. What had appeared in the blue light was a translucent female body. Light cloth-like objects floated by the woman's side. Two protrusions extended out of her naturally curling hair, making her extremely noticeable. They were animal ears. Things that seemed like animal skins were wrapped around the waist of this being that looked like a woman, but it was actually one of her many tails.

So beautiful, and so dignified. The woman's gaze had a strength that pushed Karian back.

"Who are you?"

Karian asked carefully.

"I'm the mother of your hometown, children."

".....Saintberg."

Hearing Karian's words, the woman's expression softened slightly.

That name belonged to the city that Karian had been born in.

"Why? Is this.....?"

After raising his doubts, Karian thought of the special information network between Electronic Fairies he had once heard of that had been called En.

But, even so, it wasn't a reason for the Electronic Fairy Saintberg to have appeared here.

"No..... then, is this inside En space?"

"What truly keen thinking. That's how it is, my child."

Saintberg who confirmed his thinking had already turned her back to them.

"Right now we will begin an important meeting. As a result of a proposal by myself and several others, we have decided to let you attend this meeting."

"Meeting? .....So?"

"Then..... the situation might be as you have thought."

In the depths ahead of the vaguely-speaking Saintberg, several new lights appeared. These were all Electronic Fairies with unusual humanoid shapes.

The light of the emerging Electronic Fairies slowly gathered in this space, forming a circle.

"As long as you are here, regardless of where you are you can hear every sound and see every thing. Just watch from the side for now."

After saying this, Saintberg also entered the circle of Electronic Fairies.

Karian and Stania had been left behind, only able to silently watch Saintberg move far away.

Their mixed emotions still hadn't calmed down.

Moreover, there was still an incredulous mood.

"Young Master..... this isn't a dream?"

"Yes, it's definitely not."

Responding to Stania's question, Karian once again rectified his mood, looking around again.

The light that had gathered in this vast space..... the number of Electronic Fairies wasn't very great.

It wasn't very great..... More correctly, it was much less than the number Karian had thought.

Though it hadn't been a year since he had left Zuellni, he had already been to quite a few cities through the roaming buses.

Considering the number of cities he had been to, the number of Electronic Fairies gathered here counted as small.

If the Electronic Fairies gathered here, their goals were the same as what Karian was thinking..... That was a prerequisite.

But with that hypothesis..... that expectation, he could confirm that he was correct.

The Electronic Fairies here were Electronic Fairies of cities that Karian had been to when he was spreading information and images of the crisis.

"Then everyone, is it about time to begin?"

Saintberg said this.

The responses of the other Electronic Fairies weren't sounds. But, Karian somewhat understood what was represented by the blinking lights.

"What we want to discuss is obviously the battle that began not too long ago in Grendan."

Hearing Saintberg's words, Karian's entire body couldn't help but shake. It took his entire strength to simply nod at Stania's light call of 'Young Master!' from behind.

"Oh..... so it's already begun."

That kind of nightmarish battle had begun in Grendan again.

They could also win this time.

But perhaps they would be defeated.

The fighting power that they had gathered in order to not be defeated, what would happen if it lost?

Because he had those kinds of thoughts, Karian couldn't stop traveling.

The results of this journey would now be revealed. Karian was already so tense that he forgot to exhale the air that he gulped down.

"What does the information coming from Grendan say?"

Other Electronic Fairies asked, and Saintberg shook her head.

"The situation isn't that simple."

Saintbert spoke.

"The conditions change continuously. Grendan's pure-blood holders are currently beginning to fight, and also, the mother's secret plan has also completed the transition to the next-generation successor, and is currently preparing to depart for Grendan." [1]

Grendan's pure-blood holders..... That should mean the Heaven's Blade successors.

Then, what did the 'mother's secret plan' mean?

That was information that Karian didn't know, and moreover he couldn't even speculate.

But, the situation that Karian had always been bringing up had already happened, and the strength that had been prepared for it had truly begun moving.

Then, what about the preparations that Karian had made?

He looked at Saintberg, and the Electronic Fairies' talk still continued.

"There's no reason to discuss the trends of the battle. It is already too late to decide according to the developments of the situation like we have done up to now. Right now the decision we should make is to act or not to act."

"But....."

"This is only a precaution, and it's still quite a late precaution. An action like taking precautions after waiting for an illness to be confirmed is something that would be spurned by an insurance company. But it's a peculiar situation this time, because the policyholders began insuring after creating the insurance company themselves."

"That's quite the metaphor."

The one who said this was an old Electronic Fairy that looked like a tree. Things like tree branches grew out everywhere from his body, and green leaves would float down lightly seemingly at any time.

"In terms of significance, it's a similar thing to insurance. But, there's Grendan and our mother. There's already these two preparations, and they're all extremely strong. Since it's called insurance, then at the least we should prepare side by side with them, no matter what. But, can we do that?"

"Nn?"

"We probably can't."

The other Electronic Fairies' thoughts were the same as the words of the old-looking Electronic Fairy.

"Then what should we do next?"

It wasn't Saintberg who said this, but a new voice.

It sounded like the voice of a girl even younger than Saintberg, and words that seemed as if they were managing the old man resounded in the vast space.

"If both preparations are defeated, will we be destroyed without having done anything?"

A warm voice entered Karian's ears, but there was a strong force contained inside that warmth.

Karian cast his gaze downwards, and then once again looked into the group of lights.

After looking carefully, a shape surrounded by the lights was clearly revealed.

A young girl.

A young girl that Karian had seen before.

"Zuellni."

She was there, and had begun speaking to the other Electronic Fairies.

"Though it's correct to assign things to those who can complete them. However, are we currently in a position where we can do other things only after completing the mission given to us?"

"Is there anything we can do?"

The old man asked. He seemed to be the representative of the opposing faction.

"Isn't it only because he trusts that there are still things he can do that he continues to travel and that we gathered here?"

"Hmm."

Touching his beard, the old man turned his gaze to Karian.

Though he had the external appearance of an old man, his gaze was filled with youthful heat. The age relationship between his external appearance and his mind should be different from humans, and Karian must have been bound by human common sense, getting an incorrect feeling.

While he was puzzled by that incorrect feeling, Karian was unknowingly surrounded by the Electronic Fairies' light.

"When....."

Stania behind him made a surprised sound.

Had they been the ones moving? Or had the other parties moved? Regardless of which, it had occurred at a speed that the Military Artist Stania hadn't noticed.

"Then please ask him to explain."

The old man spoke.

Gazes focused on Karian.

A sudden weight oppressed Karian's body. He who had made speeches countless times to audiences before as the Student Council president of Zuellni was now enduring a completely different kind of tension from before.

What really was this weight?

"It's the weight of lives."

At the same time as Karian put his hand on his chest, a voice sounded.

Zuellni was by his side.

The light that covered her body also covered Karian.

A warm feeling spread out from the center of his body, letting Karian feel that the weight pressing down on him gradually lightened.

"It's because of your hard work that we have this meeting today ."

Zuellni said warmly.

"......Things wouldn't have become like this either if it weren't for you telling me the situation that one day."

Karian replied, and after listening, Zuellni showed an innocent smile befitting of her external appearance of a young girl.

That day, after that nightmarish day when Zuellni and Grendan came in contact, Karian had come in contact with various things. In a laboratory, he witnessed a girl awakening from a deep sleep that had continued until then, and had learned everything that was happening to the world in the Academy City's Mechanical Department from Zuellni.

Why would Zuellni tell him this?

After hearing Zuellni's words, Karian had asked her.

"I haven't only told this to you."

She had replied like that.

Though it was very short, in the history of the Academy City, she had already told this to several students.

But as expected, they didn't know what to do unless the crisis was appearing right by them, and it seemed that there was no one who could come up with tactics to confront it.

"If it were a Military Artist, then maybe it would be enough if they decided to fight."

At that time, she had said this.

"But, is it enough for a normal person who is not a Military Artist to just not know anything?"

Her pure doubt, like a child's, was given to Karian.

The right to decide had been given to Karian.

Zuellni had probably told these things to those who could do something.

But, she only conveyed it, nothing more.

It was prohibited for the Electronic Fairies to tell people of the world's crisis that had always been a hidden secret.

Zuellni usually couldn't speak because of this.

"Why would you do this?"

Karian who knew these things asked Zuellni.

There were already sufficient preparations to face the world's crisis, and it should be that there wasn't anything else they could do, and moreover he didn't have that power.

It wouldn't be strange for the people preparing for the fate of this world to have already considered everything.

But then, why would Zuellni tell Karian about this?

Could it be that she only wanted to spread anxiety?

"Whether you like it or not, as long as there's a possibility, it's better to tell this to those who will worry about the world. Because this is the city filled with possibilities."

Zuellni had said this with a naive expression.

The Academy City.

A city filled with possibilities.

Yes, perhaps there were indeed innumerable possibilities gathered there.

But because of that, because she was the Electronic Fairy of the Academy City, Zuellni had thought of acting like that.

"You're really a foolish person."

Karian had said this, but he himself had made his determination.

He had determined to embark on his journey.

He decided to go to many cities, to tell of the crisis of the world to many people.

Even if Karian couldn't think of any strategy on his own, perhaps there were people who could. Perhaps they had some special means.

Even if their strength wasn't reliable as individuals, if they gathered together, perhaps they could do it.

So, when Karian graduated, he embarked on a journey.

Because of this, Karian was here now.

Being surrounded by Electronic Fairies, in order to tilt the balance of their decision, Karian took a deep breath.

Then, he spoke.

In order to make all of them act, he wove his words.

Had Lævateinn been exhausted slightly..... it truly couldn't be told from her external appearance.

Layfon felt the heat of the Dite grasped in his hand while he panted for breath..

Leerin was behind him, and Lintence by his side, with the Queen slightly in front of them.

Together, they faced the enemy, Vati Len.

No, she was no longer the Vati that Layfon knew. She had become slightly taller than before, and the impression from her clothing had changed.

She was Lævateinn. An enemy of this world since the world had been born.

A battle machine that served someone who had been imprisoned in the moon.

Nano-Celluloid Interface 1 Lævateinn.

That was her.

"....."

He no longer had anything to say to her, and Layfon only watched Lævateinn in silence.

As expected, she didn't have any appearance of weariness.

She only seemed to have a sliver of sorrow, looking expressionlessly at Leerin, and the black-clothed girl next to her.

Lævateinn's target should be the life of that girl called Saya.

Though Layfon was still dubious whether that was truth or lies in this kind of situation, this world would be destroyed because of that girl's death.

This world had been created by that black-clothed girl.

The world had already been split originally, and the world had crumbled because of fighting after being split. In order to protect the people who had fallen into the gap between worlds called the Zero Territory, Saya had acted as a container that was created, which was the current world.

Harpe had said this when they were on the road to Grendan.

The concepts in his words were too huge, making it hard to believe.

But regardless of whether Layfon believed or not, the situation had continued unfolding according to that information. Countless people and Electronic Fairies had prepared to protect the world, and enemies like Lævateinn had appeared.

The Heaven's Blade successors were gathered for that goal, the Queen had become the strongest existence because of this, and the peculiar power inside Leerin definitely also existed for this.

Then, Lævateinn had appeared here to eliminate Saya.

It had nothing to do with Layfon's feelings. They wouldn't stop the situation regardless of what unfolded, and now, this kind of situation had already come to be.

If he didn't do anything, then the situation would unknowingly develop into something that Layfon was unable to match.

Layfon was here because he felt that wouldn't do.

Whether he believed or not, that was the most meaningless question to Layfon.

There was a being here who could overturn all of his doubts.

There was a reason here that was able to make Layfon act.

Right now he only needed to respond to this reality.

".....Alright."

Layfon nodded his head after speaking softly.

He didn't hate this kind of method of switching moods.

Actually, it should be said that he relied on switching moods to live to the present.

The person before him could be the neighbor or a classmate of his, but right now it was no longer that way.

Since right now she was threatening Leerin who was both his family and his childhood friend, as well as the enemy who endangered the people of his hometown.

He had to deal with the cold reality that she had to be gotten rid of.

Letting his opponent live while at the same time allowing himself to remain intact..... Layfon's power was insufficient to pursue that kind of ending.

"Next~ up....."

Alsheyra standing before him pointed a finger. Though Layfon couldn't see from behind her back, her voice was sufficient for him to understand clearly that she was extremely pleased.

"No one will come anymore, right? Then..... It's about time to make a scene."

"....."

Lævateinn didn't make any response.

In a moment, Kei sprang up as if covering the skin on his face, and sparks scattered in front of Layfon. Something must have come in contact with that defensive Kei.

A similar scene appeared in front of Lintence.

Leerin behind him was also the same.

The disappearing light told Layfon that he couldn't take his gaze away from what was ahead of him. Layfon only silently accepted the changes that occurred, and gathered his mind to watch the Queen's next action.

A hurricane of Kei formed with the Queen as its center, and this situation was just from her increasing her Kei. Layfon endured the hurricane in order to keep from being blown away.

"Let's go."

Layfon heard a muttering sound inconsistent with the Queen's normal style.

In a moment, the Queen's slender body had disappeared.

Layfon barely caught the afterimage that her black hair left behind. But, his eyes didn't catch her movements until after the Queen once again appeared in front of Lævateinn.

Facing the suddenly-appearing Alsheyra, Lævateinn still reacted calmly.

Evading the fist that was struck out, and blocking the simultaneous kick.

As expected, it was impossible to use his eyes to catch the process of these stances being formed. It seemed as if their movements stopped for a moment, being played frame-by-frame.

Though she had blocked the kick, it didn't mean that the attack's momentum had been completely stopped. Lævateinn was kicked flying all the way to the wall.

Though Lævateinn had been smashed into the wall, her figure quickly appeared again.

"....."

But she didn't counterattack.

Lævateinn who emerged from the hole in the wall turned her neck as if examining her body.

Her appearance seemed very surprised.

"Haha."

As expected, the voice that Alsheyra let out was filled with a joyful air, but Layfon didn't have the leisure to feel pleasure in this situation.

That disparity shouldn't only be a gap of strength, because such a thing could also be seen in Savaris.

To her, this battlefield was a rare one that wouldn't end with a single strike of hers.

"Let me have some fun again."

At the same time as she spoke, the Queen's body had already disappeared.

The Queen who moved in front of Lævateinn opened her offensive with a fist. The weapon in Lævateinn's hand was smashed after a single blow, and this forced her to choose to endure the Queen's assault.

Bouncing shockwaves were everywhere underground. Moreover the entire underground space was shaking, and the noises as the metal creaked under pressure gave a very inauspicious premonition.

"......Is it alright? The city."

"You also saw things above, how could it be alright."

With a sentence, Lintence overturned the thing that Layfon had been worrying about.

"......It's fine as long as the shelters don't have trouble?"

"We should think that way."

As long as the city's residents inside the shelters were alright, that meant the city's death wasn't important. It was currently that much of a severe situation.

But, from his face it could be seen that he had other things that he worried about. No, Layfon wasn't clear on whether Lintence was worried about something or not. They were currently in a

battle, but Lintence's slightly grim face made Layfon unable to help but think of that kind of thing.

In the worst situation the shelter might not even be left. He feared that Lintence also had that kind of thought.

This battlefield had that degree of intensity.

A battle to make Lintence, the strongest Heaven's Blade successor, make that kind of troubled decision.

But.....

"We really can't go back on guarding the shelters."

Layfon said.

"My family is still in there."

His brothers were inside. Since he hadn't seen him fighting, then his adoptive father was definitely also inside.

Just like protecting Leerin, protecting them was very important to Layfon.

".....Protecting the city's residents is the obligation of Military Artists."

Lintence used a low-spirited voice to respond.

"Yes."

Hearing his master's words, Layfon nodded his head. His consciousness returned to the battle. This extraordinarily high-speed battle made it so that just following them with his eyes was tiring for Layfon.

But, if he wasn't suited for the battle in front of him at this moment, then right now he didn't have any use here.

Raising his Kei, flowing as much Kei as he could into his body. Until his mind cried out, he endlessly quickened his movement ability, in order to be able to chase the Queen's battle.

He saw it.

Layfon saw Alsheyra and Lævateinn tapping off the walls that surrounding the underground space as they engaged each other in an endless midair battle.

It wasn't short afterimages, but rather he clearly saw their movements.

"......But whether I can do that or not is something else."

To be able to follow their movements with his eyes and to be able to pursue them were two completely different things.

But even so, Layfon could feel around for some action that he could take.

The powers of these two weren't comparable. Though right now wasn't a leisurely time, he did have time to think.

He had to use this time as well as possible.

A long battle would be useless to them, and regardless of what they did they had to find a way to finish the opponent in one strike .

But in that case, they would have to prepare a huge Kei technique.

And they really didn't want to use that kind of destructive force in this underground facility so close to the Mechanical Department .

"What should we do....."

Just as Layfon was still thinking about these things.

"Haha, Grendan!"

The joyful Alsheyra called out a name.

As if responding to the call, a four-footed beast appeared not far from Layfon.

A mysterious beast whose entire body was covered with glowing light..... the Electronic Fairy Grendan.

The Electronic Fairy responding to the Queen's call made a bestial howl, and then a ball of light appeared on its head.

By the time that Layfon saw the light before him was being compressed, it had already suddenly flown out.

Flying towards Alsheyra.

The Queen deftly caught the rapidly-flying light, revealing its shape.

A spear.

Though its external appearance seemed very plain, the energy of an Electronic Fairy indeed composed this spear.

As the Queen flowed her own Kei into it, waves of Kei spread outwards with the Queen as the center.

Every time, the spear became even sturdier than before. The originally light-blue colored spear slowly became red.

The battle didn't stop as the spear continuously changed. Sweeping with the spear point, striking with the spear haft, and then using her feet to kick to widen the distance, and finally casting the spear out towards Lævateinn from far away.

Layfon had felt this kind of Kei color and vibration before.

This light had ended the battle in Grendan before.

The destructive light that stimulated Layfon's memories was drawn towards Lævateinn's body.

.....One moment before, Lævateinn who was still flying through the air reached her hand out to the light.

She opened her fingers, as if she wanted to grab the spear.

Regardless of the speed or her posture, Lævateinn couldn't possibly succeed at what she was doing. Layfon had felt in the battle before that the attack this time contained enough might to be called certain death.

But, Lævateinn grabbed the spear.

Starting from the moment it had been cast out, the spear had abandoned maintaining its form, and after Lævateinn touched it, the energy contained inside was released in the form of explosions, making the light swell up.

But, it still needed some time before it reached full capacity.

In that short moment, Lævateinn didn't completely catch the spear, but changed its trajectory, letting it continue to fly out.

"What!"

Facing that kind of unexpected development, Layfon couldn't help but gape.

In this case, then this side would be involved.

"Ugh!"

Layfon quickly moved to a position where he could block it for Leerin, pouring all of his Kei into defense.

But, this time Layfon was worried more than necessary.

The light of the explosion was bounced back before Layfon's eyes.

"......What?"

An invisible wall had blocked the explosions.

"It's Saya's power."

As the chaotic explosions blocked Layfon's vision, Leerin spoke from behind him.

"She has the power to create boundaries in this world."

"Boundaries?"

"Yes."

Layfon turned his head to look at the nodding Leerin, and he didn't really understand the meaning of 'boundaries'.

She pretty much understood this by just looking at Layfon's expression.

"Nn..... Roughly speaking, it's a very strong defensive technique?"

".....I see."

Spoken this way, it was easy to understand.

"We only have this world because that power became great."

"R, really....."

As expected, that aspect of things was still hard to understand.

It was hard to understand, and even more difficult to accept.

"I was created in an emergency shelter as a human, to be thrown into the Zero Territory."

A new voice suddenly broke into the conversation of the two of them.

It was Saya who had been silent up to now.

"Because of chance, I met Airen, and then became as I am now, but originally I was only a machine."

On the other side of the invisible wall, the force of the explosions slowly weakened.

A great hole had been opened in the city, and the outside world could be seen at a glance. The earth hidden underneath the night

and the city's shadow was quickly covered by walls made of vine-like objects. The city's emergency defense system had activated, and machinery proliferated and formed walls afterwards.

"A machine....."

Hearing Saya's words, Layfon turned backwards.

On the other side of the invisible wall, the battle between Alsheyra and Lævateinn still continued.

Lævateinn was also a machine.

She had the form of a human, and had lived with Layfon and others, but she was still a machine.

Because that was reality.

Indeed, her body had changed.

But, Layfon didn't doubt that Vati who had lived with them wasn't a human.

".....Machines will only complete their mission. They have no other doubts. They originally don't have anything like thinking ability, and opposing their original mission is like opposing their reason for existence."

Saya shouldn't be able to tell what Layfon was thinking.

But Saya still watched the battle while speaking.

"If she was something like me with a single function, then her worries should probably be easily eliminated? The functions she possesses should be 'use the abilities you have been given to serve your master'. Because of that kind of mixed and vague function, she feels worried about her own existence."

".....Is that how it is?"

Saya seemed to understand what she was talking about, but she also seemed to be a bit unclear.

"She has wanted to become closer to human emotions since the beginning, those thoughts are hidden inside her. I can tell from her outward appearance."

"Emotions?'

"I mean the emotions of her creator. His desires were all mixed into the plan. That sort of lack of unity made her a bit unbalanced, I think that's the reason."

"....."

The battle still continued. Layfon's eyes were trying to catch the two fighters.

But, Saya's words caught his attention.

"Though it's groundless, that outward appearance is probably according to the person the designer was thinking of."

Though Layfon thought about the words 'the person he was thinking of' for a moment, he understood in a moment.

"Being a machine whose one function being pursued is completely different from the other tormented her until now. So, she has always been searching."

"Searching for what?"

"Love."

"Love.....?"

"My love has never betrayed my function. But, her function leads to chaos in her love, that is why."

The battle..... still continued. The sounds of battle rocked the underground, probably shaking the entire city.

All of the people in Grendan could probably hear these shocks.

The sounds of the Queen fighting with the one who wanted to destroy the world.

But, in those sounds, Layfon couldn't help but feel a bit of sadness from a different perspective.

"She endlessly betrays herself."

"....."

The battle continued.

Alsheyra and Lævateinn used the underground as an arena, jumping and fighting back and forth. Shockwaves distorted the surrounding darkness, and the waves of Kei that spread out tormented the surrounding metal foundations.

The battle between the two of them was indeed in a blind spot of the city.

If it were above ground, then the current situation might be insignificant, but a battle so close to an important place like the Mechanical Department gave one a strange tension.

"Layfon....."

As Layfon lost the optimal chance to act, Leerin's voice came over.

"Regardless of what that person hides....."

"I know. I understand as well."

If they didn't defeat Lævateinn, then the world would be destroyed. Layfon was very clear on that.

After hearing Saya's words, Layfon had indeed lost a chance to act.

The black-clothed girl's words made him think of Vati who had once lived with him in Zuellni, that had not been a lie.

'She wants to become closer to human?'

He finally understood the meaning of 'Vati B's words that he had heard from Felli.

If he hadn't understood anything, if Lævateinn stayed a simple enemy, then this would have been a much easier thing.

But, things obviously wouldn't become like that.

"I know that she's a being we must defeat."

If he wanted to save Leerin who was caught in a whirlpool, that meant he would have to go fight.

In order to be able to protect his family members, he could only do this.

It was impossible for everyone to be able to obtain their desired outcome, he had known this for a long time. Clashes would happen all the time regardless of the stakes. Happiness wasn't the same to everyone, and these things couldn't fit together like a puzzle. In order for one person to be happy other people had to be discontent - that was a common thing.

Layfon's world was an obstacle to Lævateinn reaching her goal, so wanting to protect the world could only mean eliminating Lævateinn.

Layfon wouldn't know any method that could avoid battle.

"I'll go. I didn't come here to run away."

The labors he had undertaken before weren't so he could experience a setback here.

He hadn't gotten Felli involved in this on purpose.

Though she had said he didn't need to concern himself with that, Layfon still felt guilty that he had involved her in these dangers, and pain seeped into his heart.

Of course there was also warmth.

He couldn't ignore the throb he felt in his heart.

It was something he couldn't deceive himself about.

Layfon's focused his will into the solid sword hilt he grasped in his hand. Kei was already rushing through his body.

The battle had already begun.

"I can start at any time."

"......Really, then it's about time to start moving."

Lintence said this.

"Do we have any tactics?"

"Incinerate her after stopping her movements. Other than this, do we need anything else?"

"......Understood."

In truth, there was only one way.

Though he had originally thought that there could be some other way, he could only rely on Lintence if he had to catch up to the speed of the battle between Alsheyra and Lævateinn.

"The Queen is even less fitting for the word cooperation than I am, so we can only think of some way to coordinate with her."

"......Understood."

If he made a wrong step, he could be killed by the Queen's fist.

After making that kind of determination, Layfon jumped out.

Passing through the invisible wall that Saya had created, he didn't encounter any resistance. So, Layfon wasn't clear whether he had actually passed through it or not.

But, he was sure that he had crossed it.

The Kei pressure permeating the battlefield almost blew away Layfon as he was leaping through the air. The surrounding airflow was chaotic because of the shockwaves produced in the battle of the two.

With sometimes tailwind, sometimes a headwind, and sometimes wind blowing in opposite directions, Layfon searched for a way to jump closer to the two of them.

But, the obstruction that the chaotic wind produced was more than Layfon had thought.

"Damn."

Layfon restored the Sapphire Dite to steel threads, and then created a surface to run on by spreading the steel threads out.

As he got closer and closer to the battle, the pressure became greater, and he felt a sharp momentum from the shockwaves. Just trying to get closer was already risking his life.

Layfon clenched his teeth, jumping in.

"You're in the way!"

Alsheyra didn't seem very pleased with Layfon and Lintence getting involved.

But, that had nothing to do with Layfon and Lintence. After evading the Queen's fist, his blade attacked Lævateinn in a flash.

But the slash hadn't hit Lævateinn, but rather flew through the empty air.

However, Layfon wasn't the only one who had entered the battle.

Passing through the Kei pressure of the battle, countless soundless and presenceless spikes formed of steel threads attacked Lævateinn.

Different from Alsheyra's storm and Layfon who was pushed around by the strength chaotic airflow, it was a strike of another intruder who had quietly gotten close.

They hadn't expected the opponent to make any response.

But, it still didn't work, and their expectations were cleanly betrayed.

Moreover the one who destroyed them wasn't the enemy.

As if trying to push Layfon away, Alsheyra ran out before him and unleashed an attack. The pressure produced from that attack wiped out the power of the steel threads, blowing them away.

Lævateinn received the Queen's fist with a braced posture, and was sent flying.

"Don't get in the way!"

Alsheyra glared at Layfon as she leaped out chasing Lævateinn.

"Uh."

That kind of serious look from her who usually always wore a leisurely smile couldn't help but make Layfon stop his feet.

"Don't stop."

Lintence's voice was very low, coming from behind his back.

"Ah, sorry."

"Don't get intimidated. If you care about that woman's capriciousness we won't be able to accomplish anything."

"Y, yes!"

Capriciousness..... It was probably only Lintence who could say that after seeing the Queen's look. Layfon reclaimed his momentum, once again chasing after them.

Once he got close, a wordless roar battered Layfon's entire body . It was Alsheyra's anger.

"Urraaaaaaaaah!"

But, just like Lintence had said, in order not to get intimidated by that imposing manner, Layfon roared back.

Though his roar didn't have any meaning, by letting out his voice, Layfon who was about to be intimidated by her imposing manner once again reclaimed the courage to return to the battle.

A fistfight still continued between the two. Alsheyra released Kei power, and no weapon existed that could endure that kind of destructive force.

Their speed was extremely surprising, and just clearly seeing their movements already used all of his power.

But, since he could see their movements, then he would be able to make predictions about their next moves.

He could find a gap to attack from his predictions, and release a slash.

Lintence's steel threads would also find a matching attack.

Alsheyra didn't roar this time. Though he could feel that she was displeased, she didn't deflect their attacks.

It couldn't be told from one or two moves whether the participation of the two had a favorable effect on the battle for their side or not.

On the third and fourth move they checked their opponent.

On the fifth and sixth move they released moves more smoothly .

On the seventh and eighth move they overcame the distance.

On the tenth move they had already transcended the problems, and the battle still continued.

The battle had been successfully maintained.

Though it was at the same time an exhausting battle, he could already keep up with its rhythm.

He could participate in the fight.

(We can win!)

He began firmly believing in that kind of confidence somewhere inside his heart. While he guarded against his confidence becoming pride, he crossed the threshold of death and continued the fight.

Though Lintence's steel threads wanted to catch Lævateinn, they passed through her body.

Layfon's slashes also encountered a similar phenomenon. Like a sensation as if cutting through empty air, though Layfon was already used to it, the different feeling threw his plans afterwards into disarray the first time he felt it.

This wasn't a hallucination.

It was only that the moment the steel threads and the blade made contact, the contacted particles forming Lævateinn's body would momentarily separate.

In order to not get confused by that extraordinarily fast response, he didn't have the leisure to get arrogant.

However, why hadn't that strange phenomenon happened with Alsheyra's fist?

Was it because her speed was even faster than Layfon and Lintence? Was it because her destructive power was too strong?

If it were truly because of the two of them, then it would be difficult even if they wanted to find a way to resolve it. But if it had some other reason, then there might be the possibility of winning.

Could they find it?

Layfon put more of his focus into his eyes in order to find it. The sensation of Kei rushing under his skin stimulated him. Though Layfon couldn't see it, perhaps the nerves around his two eyes were glowing because of the high concentration of Kei.

Fists, blade, and steel threads wove a deadly dance preparing to pull that mechanical doll into the abyss of death.

But, the doll endured everything.

Endured.

Not only this, she also tried to override it.

"Tch."

Alsheyra clicked her tongue, but it wasn't towards Layfon and Lintence.

Layfon who was sticking to the battle searching for an opportunity for victory knew that their side was slowly turning passive.

Was it because the addition of him and Lintence only made Alsheyra unable to unleash her original power?

Layfon only thought this for a moment.

But, he was quickly negated.

It was purely that Lævateinn's speed and power had overcome their side's.

"Even now....."

Layfon unconsciously spoke to himself.

Receiving the assault from the Heaven's Blade successors aboveground, and sustaining Layfon and Lintence's attacks on the road here, and then having the Queen also enter the battle after coming underground, Lævateinn should clearly have been

continuously destroyed in that period, but right now, at this stage, Lævateinn's strength was still stronger then theirs?

"Damn....."

Her overcoming their methods made him feel an abnormal sense of crisis.

That kind of feeling made Layfon decide to leave the battle for a moment.

It wasn't only Layfon who left the battle.

Almost at the same time, the other two also left Lævateinn's side.

The battle stopped.

With a silence as if trying to make one forget the intense battle up till now, they stood still. The attackers and the defender's gazes converged.

"It's truly tangled. But this is also my first time, please be gentle."

"....."

Lævateinn didn't make any response to Alsheyra's words.

But, Layfon felt that some change had happened.

Not to say that an expression emerged on her, nor that she made any small movement.

Then, what was it.....?

"Ah....."

He understood.

It was Lævateinn's face.

Her crystal clear skin was dirtied by the dust of the battle, though that was a natural thing.

But up to before she arrived in this underground space, she hadn't had this dust on her body.

Because of her strong regenerative ability, she could restore herself the moment she suffered wounds, and that was definitely also linked with her clean skin that wasn't fitting for this extreme battlefield.

Was that relationship slowly crumbling?

"There's something that's very strange, which is your expression ."

Watching the unmoving Lævateinn, Alsheyra spoke.

"Or perhaps, has the puzzle already been solved?"

"It's the special ability of the 'Thorn Princess'."

Seemingly interested by Alsheyra's words, Lævateinn also opened her mouth.

"'Thorn Princess'?"

"That's Saya."

Just as Layfon was feeling confused, Lintence told him from his side.

Ignoring Layfon, Lævateinn continued speaking.

"She is using her space manipulation abilities to remove the Aurora particles from this pace."

"Ah, that's true. Are they called Aurora particles? It's a different way of saying pollutants. Because we also know that those are the source of your strength, so we only have this kind of outcome after spending quite a bit of labor to remove them!"

"It was Saya who thought of and implemented all of this, it has nothing to do with Her Majesty."

Leerin muttered softly.

"......But this way, won't you Military Artists be unable to wield your latent abilities?'

"Yes, if we were normal Military Artists."

Layfon didn't really understand the conversation between the Queen and Lævateinn, so he listened while regulating his breathing.

Kei rushed through his body, and even so, nothing at all was irregular.

"The Kei vein that Military Artists possess originally had the function to convert Aurora particles into energy. So in a situation without Aurora particles, normal Military Artists would be unable to fight."

Layfon felt that 'normal Military Artists' had been stressed repeatedly.

"But, the Heaven's Blade successors here..... the original Heaven's Blade successors were people with that kind of power. To possess such a power, there had to be some kind of factor in the Kei vein. And that factor was Airen's factor."

"Airen's factor?"

He had heard that name inside Harpe.

It seemed to be the name of person who had imprisoned Lævateinn's master, Ignasis, inside the moon.

"Airen who was the origin of the Military Artists has a rare Kei vein with a certain factor, and possessing it meant possessing the possibility of becoming a Heaven's Blade successor."

"......Airen's factor was an abnormality. It could also be called crystallized Aurora particles."

"It seems like that was the case."

"So that's how it is, in that case battle would be possible even without Aurora particles."

"Yes, and so, I'm very sorry, but you've been destined to be killed after being slowly weakened."

Lævateinn's goal was to eliminate Saya, so she couldn't escape from her 'invisible wall'.

Considering that it had defended against the explosion just now , perhaps an attack from outside the 'invisible wall' was no use.

But.....

"I apologize, but I will not accept that kind of ending."

Lævateinn's expressionless face didn't change at all.

Perhaps that was normal. Her expression had never changed when she was in Zuellni either. That expressionless appearance made one think of a Psychokinesist. Just like Felli, it made one unable to do anything but guess when they would be able to understand the movements of their hearts.

But things weren't like that.

It was impossible for him to understand her lack of expression.

Because Lævateinn was a true machine.

.....Then, did her words right now contain emotions or not?

Were they only just recounting facts?

Even if they were only recounting facts, weren't there several meanings contained among them?

Because this was her goal so she refused to leave.....

She didn't have any reason to leave so she refused to leave.

Because she couldn't lose so she refused to leave.

If it were the final meaning, then he had to keep alert.

If she overexerted herself, there could be a sliver of hope.

But, if she only said this because she was already confident.....

"Your Majesty, please be careful."

"Hm. But being careless is my trademark!"

Alsheyra still made a silly response to Layfon's proposal.

At the same time as these words were being spoken, Alsheyra moved.

If he had paid less attention he probably wouldn't even have felt her disappear, but Layfon still saw her movement.

The fistfight began again.

He had thought so.

But, it was wrong.

"What!"

A surprised gasp and a shockwave came, passing through the area behind Alsheyra.

Her fist had been caught.

Lævateinn still stood still, using a single hand to catch the Queen's fist.

"You are indeed extremely strong, and that girl and Saya are also extremely strong. But....."

"......Ghh."

Alsheyra's body shook slightly as she let out broken words.

Could it be that she couldn't take her fist back?

"But, your lives will probably have burned out before I am exhausted completely."

Cold words seeped into Layfon's mind.

He heard words announcing their destruction without any hesitation.

No, that was the truth.

Complying with her mission, Saya had said.

Complying with her master's orders, she had said.

In order to rescue her master who had been imprisoned in the moon, it didn't even matter if Lævateinn's own body was destroyed. Layfon believed her words held that meaning.

The underground battle still continued.

Then, what about aboveground?

A strange silence dominated everything.

It should be said that it was a silence that made one panic.

".....Ha."

The surrounding air was incredibly tense, and one had to be cautious at every breath, as if worrying that something would

explode. As he breathed, Haia watched everything that was happening in the surroundings.

Only a few minutes had passed since the giant that Lævateinn had left aboveground had been defeated.

The sacrifices had not been small.

And that crazy laugh that Savaris had made at the end still lingered in Haia's ears even now.

There was a huge hole before him.

It was the place that the giant had originally occupied, forming a giant bowl-shaped hole. The center was a dark and deep hole.

The giant's original body, Lævateinn, had entered the underground there.

Heading to the place where the Queen was.

He couldn't not go.

That sentence continuously occupied his thinking.

The battle still continued, the battlefield had just changed positions.

But he still had energy.

Then right now he should quickly advance, and meeting up with the Queen and the others was an urgent priority.

That was the appropriate way of thinking.

"......It should be that way~"

Haia muttered discreetly.

As if not to disturb any explosives hidden anywhere, he spoke cautiously. Because he didn't know whether that thing would detonate because of something, he was quite cautious.

That kind of atmosphere filled the surroundings.

But, he couldn't move.

If it were just him then perhaps he might have classified this feeling as an illusion. There were many people here whose battle experience far surpassed Haia's, and following behind to act would be enough.

But, Haia wasn't the only person who didn't take action; the others were all the same.

In other words, this atmosphere told them that there was still something that would happen.

"Damn..... What's going on with this lukewarm situation~"

Haia gathered all of his power into recovery for the moment. The situation he was in right now could be said to be a lukewarm condition.

Regardless of what he thought, the battle underground couldn't have ended already. He should have decided on the battlefield he would advance to next long ago.

But his body told him the battle hadn't ended.

Others were in the same situation.

But, they didn't have any way to believe it.

So it was a lukewarm situation.

If someone said 'Let's go underground' at that time, Haia would have happily followed.

But, no one said so.

"What's going on~....."

Muttering this, Haia took note of something and raised his head to look at the sky.

Because of the battle just now, sporadic fires were everywhere. Because everyone other than the Heaven's Blade successors were pretty much all in the shelters, the things combating fire were all firefighting machines.

The fire retardant scattered everywhere was completely unable to block the flames.

So, the night sky was polluted red and black with flame and smoke.

Because of the air filter, the smoke lingered in the city air.

On the other side of the smoke, the moon could be seen.

The moon today seemed bigger than normal, as if encompassing the sky.

Yes..... it seemed extremely big.

"......What's going on~?"

A change had appeared on the moon. As time passed, the smoke above his head had become more and more dense, making it too late to observe.

Moreover, who in the world would make this into a crisis?

At that time, the people who didn't know the relations between the moon and Airen wouldn't possibly care about those things.

Haia focused attention to his eyes.

The appearance of the moon felt strange.

The exterior of the moon had countless bowl-shaped holes.

Why was the moon in the sky, and why did the moon's exterior have so many bowl-shaped holes? That was an eternal mystery.

As Haia noticed this mysterious appearance, countless cracks emerged.

It was a scene that was even less real.

Was it because of the air, it seemed like the exterior of the moon that had been imprinted on their eyes after looking through some screen, and the cracks continuously increased, as if a picture being drawn on paper, completely deviating from the moon that had existed until now.

But, they had almost no doubt that these things were happening on the moon.

"What....."

Even if he understood, if there was nothing that he could do, then he wouldn't think of doing anything.

Haia only wordlessly watched the phenomenon occurring in the sky.

The other Heaven's Blade successors behind him also noticed this phenomenon.

But, they were the same, and couldn't do anything.

Other than watch everything develop, they could do nothing.

The cracks drawn on the moon continuously emerged, extending, spreading their area, and finally covering the entire moon.

After the portion they could see was filled with cracks..... the moon began to crumble.

The spherical form began to crumble and disintegrate.

Did the moon's location not have the concept of gravity? The pieces didn't fall to the ground, but rather became small satellites, spreading in all directions.

Not to say that he didn't think of it, but amazingly, Haia didn't feel any fear of such a giant thing falling down even from the start.

The moon became many pieces and scattered out.

Then, everyone felt that the changes should have ended.

Because the next change should have needed quite some time.

However, it began from an unexpected place.

"......Eh? What?"

The first one who made a sound was Claribel.

Though he didn't know whether or not it had to do with the city's current condition, at the same time as the huge change in the sky attracted their eyes, something new had invaded and the next event occurred.

They couldn't judge the relationship between them immediately .

A shaking of the earth occurred.

"How's the situation?"

Haia asked into the Psychokinesis flake.

At the same time as he asked, all he could think of was that the battle underground had finally reached the place where the Queen was.

But, the answer he received wasn't like that.

(There are new energy responses, growing at a shocking speed!)

"What!!?"

Haia hadn't even thought of that kind of situation.

At the same time as he noticed the presence and turned his head , explosions occurred.

Blazing flames spread everywhere, revealing a figure.

"I hadn't thought you would be left~"

Something he had originally thought already defeated still remained.

Powerlessness, terror, and then tension. The bored feeling that he wanted to continue was unexpected still there even after all of this, and the two feelings strangely merged together, raising his awareness of the battle.

Flame and smoke were blown away, revealing a figure.

The thing slowly rising from the ground was long like a snake, a fantastically-shaped belt-like object.

".....Ah?"

Haia was confused.

Something was different.

The problem of the giant thing was different from the things up to now.

It had become tattered, which should be as a result of the battle up to now. But this wasn't the only reason.

Its outer appearance seemed to give an inconsistent feeling.

Roughly speaking, the appearance of the enemy in the battle up to now had a certain aesthetic, and it felt like its outer appearance had some meaning other than what was necessary for function.

But right now there was no such feeling.

The tattered thing..... It was unsightly like something that was forced to scrounge around for things in order to survive.

"It's not the same thing~?"

Haia had that kind of feeling.

But, if it were truly the case, the situation still wasn't simple.

Something else had already entered the battle. Though it had only been a short time, because of his concentration on recovery, he felt that he had already restored quite a bit of his Kei power.

"Though it can't be called a completed state~"

Though he said this.

Even if the condition of the enemy was the same as its outer appearance, if he thought about the destructive power that was necessary to break through that regenerative ability, then the state of the current Heaven's Blade successors made him feel unsafe.

That they couldn't match up, or perhaps would be defeated.

Those kinds of thoughts appeared in Haia's mind.

"Then, what should we do....."

Though he thought in his mind that it was better to act quickly, then, how could he act? He couldn't think of it.

(Do we have any tactics?)

Troyatte's voice came through the Psychokinesis flake. That question showed that he was the same as Haia, with the same doubts.

Not long after, a moment after Haia's feet took a step, a change occurred.

Psychokinesis had succeeded in sensing that change.

It came from the sky.

"Who?"

In the place where Grendan's Psychokinesists were gathered, Felli unconsciously mumbled.

She didn't have enough to prove the reason of the change was a single person.

But there was something closing in on Grendan at a high speed.

Just noticing this, Felli was already convinced that the true nature of that thing was a single person.

Though it wasn't a fitting feeling for a Psychokinesist, she didn't think of denying it.

That thing became a streak of red light falling towards Grendan.

Quakes rocked the earth.

It wasn't created by the mass of the falling thing.

Rather, it was produced by the vibrations of Kei from the strike that went out at the same time as the thing touched down.

Felli concentrated her Psychokinesis on the landing area. Through the smoke and the visible red light of Kei, there was a person standing there.

It was a person Felli was very familiar with.

"Captain....."

Nina Antalk stood there.

Chapter 5 - Choice of Worlds

Before the red light reached Grendan.

Her great-grandfather's corpse had disappeared from the ground.

Probably because he had transcended life for a long time, her great-grandfather's corpse disappeared into the wind like sand.

It was a way of disappearing that made one feel that he had never lived on this world.

But an unexpected question emerged in Nina's mind as she watched all of this blankly.

"......How should I explain this to father?"

Her great-grandfather had died. His corpse wasn't even there, so what could she use as proof to explain to her father?

Nina who pondered this noticed the two Dites that had dropped there.

They were her great-grandfather's things.

These were the only things she could bring back.

But, just this would probably be enough. In the first place, it was impossible to use roaming buses to transport a corpse. In that case, burying the corpse there and bringing his possessions back was the proper treatment.

The process when one died outside the city was always like this.

He wouldn't be able to sleep on the ground of his hometown.

"Ugh....."

An obvious thing made Nina feel a headache, and her body naturally trembled.

Feelings of regret and helplessness spilled forth, but she couldn't control it.

"Ugh, uhh....."

She moaned.

Her great-grandfather, Gildred Antalk.

Extremely long-lived.

Starting from when Nina was born, he had always, always..... From very long ago he had always had the determination to face the world's crisis, preparing for this, and always waiting.

That was her great-grandfather.

Always protecting Nina, always protecting the Antalk family, always protecting the Senou City.

That kind of person had now died here.

Before the world's crisis that he had always waited for, he had fallen.

He had lost to Lævateinn.

After entrusting everything to Nina, he had departed.

"S, someone like me....."

The tears that fell on the dry earth were absorbed, shriveled, and disappeared.

When Nina noticed, she had already been covered by a warm light.

On her right side was an Electronic Fairy with an appearance that looked like an arrogant youngster.

Behind her was an Electronic Fairy with an appearance that seemed only a few years different from Nina.

On her left side was an Electronic Fairy with an appearance that looked like a very calm beauty.

And in front of her was.....

"You are....."

Nina raised her head.

In front of her was an Electronic Fairy with the appearance of a young girl who sat on a giant flower.

The name of the young girl on the flower was Armadune.

The youngster on her right was Dischale.

The adolescent behind her was Tentorium.

The beauty on her right was Falysodam.

They were all Electronic Fairies who had fought shoulder-to-shoulder with her late great-grandfather.

As well as the Electronic Fairies that Nina would succeed.

Different from the Haikizoku Melnisc inside Nina's body, these four were Electronic Fairies who had decided from the start that their existence would be converted completely to be fighting strength of Military Artists.

".....Is it alright even if it's me?"

Nina's cheeks were wet with tears, as she gazed at Armadune while asking. This was because Nina felt that she should be something like a captain to these four Electronic Fairies.

"I'm a very pitiful person, not someone great like great-grandfather."

Someone who, upon encountering a setback, would hope for someone to stand up and pull her up, a weak person who couldn't even stand up again on her own.

She had been like that as well when she had been in Schneibel.

She would lose at the important time.

She had originally believed that she would change if she trained outside of the city, but her hard work in Zuellni hadn't produced any admirable fruit.

Even so, her great-grandfather had died after entrusting everything to Nina.

It was impossible for her to have confidence.

"......I only always thought that there were some things that had to be done."

After she had learned of Vati Len's true form, she had worked hard to become strong. She also thought that her hard work had succeeded, and at the least, she had become stronger as a Military Artist.

Then, what about her mind?

Had her mind become strong?

Did she have the necessary strength of mind to succeed her great-grandfather's will?

Had she become someone who could be a companion of these four Electronic Fairies?

Did Nina have a strong enough heart to devote her everything to fight against the world's crisis?

She didn't have that kind of confidence.

"I always wanted to become strong. But..... I have no confidence ."

"......Then become stronger."

A voice suddenly came from in front of her.

It was Armadune's voice.

"Become strong and succeed everything, right here and right now."

The girl on the flower whose face had slight traces of baby fat looked at Nina with an extremely firm expression.

"We hope that you can have a strong heart of iron like Gildred."

"A heart of iron.....?"

Her great-grandfather had also said similar things.

"We will prepare strength for you. What you need is the iron heart that can focus this strength."

The meaning was to combine strength and willpower together.

"In order to wield the full strength, techniques and a robust heart are necessary. We hope that you can also possess these."

Armadune repeated similar words.

Her gaze didn't move from Nina one bit.

Only watching the teary-eyed Nina with a firm expression.

Looking around her, the other Electronic Fairies also showed similar expressions.

Yes.

Nina wasn't the only one feeling grief for her great-grandfather's death.

The Electronic Fairies were also extremely grieved.

Thinking carefully, they had been with her great-grandfather much longer than Nina, and their relationship with her great-grandfather should have been much more intimate.

Then their sadness wasn't something that Nina's could match up to.

But even so, the Electronic Fairies still endured their tears.

Thinking of this, Nina felt that her heart was shaken. The eyes of the Electronic Fairies staring at her made her feel as if Gildred were there looking at her.

Let him see it again, the kind of courage you had when you opposed your great-grandfather the last time you met.

She felt as if she had been told this.

".....I'm truly too pathetic."

Nina was the only one not moving forward.

"Right now isn't the time to do those things. Battle has already begun, the battlefield that my great-grandfather was always waiting for."

And now, her great-grandfather was dead.

"I'm the only one still here. And I have already sworn to witness everything that was happening right now, and do everything that I could."

After coming to Zuellni, she had been pulled into various things . Then, she had experienced that battle in Grendan, learned of the crisis that the world was going to face, and had made the determination to step in.

Nina stood up.

She stood here, looking at the Electronic Fairies.

"I don't have confidence in whether or not I can correctly succeed great-grandfather's legacy."

Nina continued speaking, facing the Electronic Fairies and accepting their gazes from the front.

She wove her fundamental thoughts into her words.

"But, I also wished to witness the meaning of this battlefield. I also wished from the bottom of my heart that I would be able to be related with this battlefield."

She didn't have the confidence that she would be able to complete what she had been entrusted. Because right now she didn't even know whether or not she would be able to fulfill her own desires.

But, because of this.....

"I don't want to turn back on myself. And there are things that I want to protect. So....."

So.....

Before the words she spoke afterwards, Nina took in a big breath. As if bearing a heavy fate not long after she had been born.

Beginning from the moment when Nina finished saying everything, she would no longer be able to escape, she understood this.

In other words, right now when she hadn't yet said everything, she still had the opportunity to take it all back.

(Idiot.)

She had thought of something extremely stupid.

Even if she thought this, even if she knew that this was an extremely shameful thought, that option wasn't so simple to neglect.

The battlefield that was being fought now was directly connected to the fate of the entire world. The enemy wanted the world's life, and if they lost, everyone would die.

There was no longer anywhere to escape to.

If she wanted to continue living there was only battle.

If she wanted to continue living.

In other words, right here, there was another thing she could choose.

That was choosing death.

The choice of not fighting and simply dying directly.

If she thought of the endless terror she would confront in battle, thinking of the emotional burden she had borne several times in the jaws between life and death, thinking about the terror of it all, perhaps dying in an instant would be more relaxing.

That kind of thought appeared in Nina's heart.

No, that thought had actually always been there.

She had been born into this world as a Military Artist who had to fight, and then had been brought up, had been educated, and in that process, those kinds of thoughts had slowly been born.

She had always cast aside that cowardly thought, and had never truly faced it.

If she died then she wouldn't need to fight.

She wouldn't have to brandish her weapons and fight.

She would be liberated.

Things would become relaxed.

Ahh.....

Though it was a thought that she had always cast aside, that kind of thought was greatly enticing.

(I'm truly a coward.)

She thought this again.

Not to say that the sense of justice in her heart had washed away everything, but rather, if the thing in her heart that she believed was a sense of justice was slightly weaker, then she

wouldn't possibly be standing here in this moment, and she also understood this.

Her true self was a weak and cowardly person, a pitiful being.

So before she was caught by her terror she had to run with her full strength, and shake it off.

After becoming conscious of the fact that simply dying would let everything become relaxed, she was even more tempted to escape from her terror.

She had made it to today in an unconscious state.

(If it's like this, then this time I can escape.)

The sweet temptation of that option which had come into her heart continuously drew closer to Nina who had become conscious of it.

But it was a sweetness mixed in with rancidity.

She couldn't choose that option; she couldn't make that kind of decision.

(I know.)

She was very clear that she needed a motive to be able to escape .

(I don't want to be thought of as a useless thing.)

By who? By everyone.

By the people she respected, by the people she was hostile to, by the people who were hostile to her, neighbors, friends, acquaintances, people who knew Nina though Nina didn't know them..... She didn't want to let these people think that Nina Antalk was an incredibly useless person.

Then, for the person who had pulled her useless self back up.

For the person who had become her goal.

Because of this, since she had silently fought until now, if she betrayed her words today, then she would be even more burdened with the stigma of one who had run away.

In order to avoid all of this, she at least had to leave behind proof that she had fought.

The option of running away hadn't been in Nina from the beginning.

(So, it's alright.)

She could receive that determination.

She could proceed to the battlefield.

Forget tough like iron, perhaps she only had an extremely weak determination.

But, she was determined that she would definitely not run away .

A determination to fight.

Therefore.....

Though it felt very long, all of these thoughts happened in the span of her deep breath.

"So....."

The conclusion came.

The final moment of her choice ended.

"Please lend your strength to me."

She recounted the conclusion that her thinking had guided her to, telling it to the Electronic Fairies.

"We obey, new master."

Nina didn't know whether this was the best answer to them.

But, the battle had already started.

Moreover, there was only Nina in front of them.

The Electronic Fairies had no other choice, and since they had decided to fight, then they could only choose Nina who was before them.

Perhaps they were the most sorrowful ones.

(Because they have no choice other than me who is like this.)

But because of this, she couldn't betray their expectations.

She could only fight.

Strength swelled up in Nina's body.

Nina didn't encounter any problems controlling the strength.

Perhaps this was because she had accepted it from the start.

The other thing different from her great-grandfather was that the light of Kei that overflowed from Nina's body was red.

Why would this be?

It was probably because she was different from her great-grandfather, and the Haikizoku was still inside Nina's body.

"Melnisc, are you alright?"

(There's nothing wrong, master. You're the one who should take care not to become controlled by this power.)

"Understood. Armadune."

After replying to Melnisc, Nina looked forward.

"We need to give up on this city, we no longer have time to move to Grendan."

(Understood. We have already connected to Grendan's En, and we can depart at any time.)

The link she had desired was also already perfectly complete.

Of course, there were other unexpected byproducts.

Nina felt that the sensation she had of Melnisc now was stronger than before she had merged.

One other thing.

Nina felt that the existence of the nameless Electronic Fairy that had merged with Nina before Melnisc was even clearer.

Her young self had originally planned to rescue, but instead had been rescued by that tiny being. The young Electronic Fairy had become a part of Nina's Kei vein.

Right now Nina could feel its presence.

She could feel that child still living inside her.

Nina felt both surprise and joy at this, and this also made her think of her old wounds.

(It's impossible for me to run.)

One of her first experiences that had built her current self was there.

She was there, watching Nina.

Nina couldn't betray that young Electronic Fairy that had allowed herself to continue living.

(Let's go together.)

At the same time she said that, a faint twinge came from her Kei vein.

She felt that this was the reply of that young Electronic Fairy.

"Alright!"

Nina focused her consciousness, and something like a giant, dark hold appeared before her.

This was the entrance to the space that had been named En by the Electronic Fairies.

Nina jumped in.

There were countless lines of light passing back and forth in the darkness. The current Nina could understand that those lines of light were the pieces of information that the Electronic Fairies traded back and forth.

Though the lines of light that passed by made one feel a bit unsafe, right now there was no time to confirm their origin.

Not long after, Nina was sent to the sky of Grendan.

At the same time she flew out of the En, she was baptized by smoke. But the smoke was absorbed into the Kei waves that she had already released, and diffused.

On the other side of the smoke, a city blazing with a sea of fire spread underneath her.

"It's somehow become like this....."

Nina descended while looking at the horrifying city, speechless. The destructive shockwaves the battle produced had the palace as

their center, destroying the buildings in its surroundings in almost concentric circles. Fingers of flame extended out, and the fire in the moving city was intensifying.

As if trying to destroy those concentric circles, there were many deep trenches in the city. The ground portion had been turned upside down, and some had disappeared.

Several of the city's legs had broken and fractured.

The scene before her eyes couldn't help but make one think whether this city had already died.

But, it still hadn't died.

There were still people fighting.

There was another place spewing out more smoke than the place she was descending towards.

There was a monster extending out of that place with a terrifying twisted shape.

"What is that thing?'

(Because of the moon's crumbling, things that were originally on that side seem to have come here.)

Armadune said this.

"Moon?"

Nina mumbled, falling towards the ground.

As she fell, she raised her head to look at the sky. In the center of her raised gaze, as if chasing her as she fell, was the crumbling moon.

Pieces of giant mass scattered in space.

(Captain.)

At the same time as the scenery made her widen her eyes, the Psychokinesis flake that drew close to her transmitted a voice that Nina was familiar with.

"Felli!? Why are you here?"

(I wanted to ask you that question, and though what I really want to ask about is your current condition, what's more important is the situation. Do you need an explanation?)

"Please."

Though Nina was very surprised that Felli was here, she had still slightly expected this.

That meant, Layfon should also be here.

Though she definitely hadn't told them the truth, they had still declared that they would definitely follow behind. And as such, he had indeed left Zuellni.

So, though she didn't know the process behind it, Nina felt that it wasn't a particularly strange thing even if he were here.

As for why, it was because Grendan was his hometown.

(Then.....)

Felli began explaining.

Lævateinn had suddenly begun attacking Grendan, and the Heaven's Blades successors had gone on the offensive, and then part of Lævateinn had invaded the underground, Layfon and Lintence had pursued. She told all of these things to Nina.

".....Layfon is underground, huh."

(Yes, and because the underground is currently in a peculiar state where Psychokinesis cannot reach, I cannot gather information, so as to how things are.....)

"I know."

Layfon was there.

Fighting underground.

This made Nina slightly ease up a bit.

Though Lævateinn had taken all of Zuellni hostage back then, if she could have, Nina had wanted to keep all of this a secret.

That kind of apologetic mood towards them, along with the fact that this had even made them arrive in Grendan before her, those feelings combined together to make Nina's heart unable to calm down for a while.

But, right now wasn't the time to get bent out of shape over those kinds of things.

Before her was an abnormal being.

"In the end, I won't be able to go underground if I don't get rid of these things first."

If she let these kinds of things go, then who knew what would happen to the people hiding in the shelters. Even if she met up with the people underground it would be of no use.

(The Heaven's Blade successors are already extremely fatigued.)

"Understood. Then I'll think of something."

(Eh?)

Nina ignored Felli's doubt, reaching both hands to her weapon belt.

On it were attached four Dites.

Two were the ones she had obtained from Zuellni.

Two were her great-grandfather's.

Nina's hands reached for the Dites she had obtained from Zuellni, restoring them.

In the familiar sensation, an unfamiliar Kei pressure rushed out.

"Come, first true battle."

After saying this, Nina flew towards the twisted monster.

Because of internal Kei and the explosive results of her strengthened legs treading on the ground, Nina was sent to a world of instantaneous speed.

"Ugh!"

A higher-than-expected pressure pushed on Nina's entire body, making her clench her teeth.

Her vision was distorted, and she quickly strengthened her nerves to correct her vision, and other areas were also tuned by use of strengthening Kei and balanced out with internal Kei.

Nina readied the iron whips towards the monster towering in front of her.

Whether the creature hadn't noticed her or whether it was focusing on regenerating its body, it seemed not to have any response.

Of course this could also be carelessness. It believed that its regenerative ability was completely insurmountable before the tiny humans' destructive power.

But, Nina had appeared here to do exactly this.

"Break!"

She shouted.

Release.

Combined Internal and External Kei variant, Raijin.

A blow with almost no hesitation.

This was a strike carrying all of her beliefs.

This was a blow from a human that wouldn't permit the opponent to escape.

This contained all of the strength she had inherited, a blow of Nina who had chosen to advance.

The red light covering Nina drew a red line on the earth, pointing towards the monster.

Exploding.

Smashing.

Bursting.

Flame and roars connected endlessly, and the explosions that occurred on the monster's exterior and the vibrations shooting out and penetrating into the monster's interior endlessly repeated.

Destructive shockwaves also affected the earth.

"Uwah!"

The explosions that were produced under her feet blew Nina into the sky.

If she hadn't spread out Kongoukei at the same time, she probably would have suffered severe injuries from the Kei technique she had used.

".....Dangerous."

(Are you alright?)

"I'm alright!"

(It seemed like you just self-destructed, are you truly alright?)

"I, I'm fine! I'm just not too used to it!"

(Then it's okay.)

Felli's voice from the other side of the Psychokinesis flake was very cold. Nina's cheeks even became hot from trying to deceive her.

(If only the city's surface portion is harmed, it can still endure, because the city of Grendan is constructed particularly solidly. Please think more clearly when you use your strength.)

Felli ignored Nina's mixed feelings, continuing to talk.

She seemed not to feel any particular surprise at the changes to Nina's body.

"Felli....."

(.....As long as you don't destroy the city, go ahead and fight. We can only follow you.)

The latter half that seemed as if it had deliberately been included made Nina's chest feel a bit tight.

Though the situation had been rather extraordinary, she had still kept a secret from Felli and the others.

The seventeenth platoon members should have borne the burden together, but Nina hadn't said a word to them.

Right now Felli's words were stinging her for that.

But, she didn't feel pained.

A warm sensation came from the wounds from the stings.

"Sorry."

(You and Layfon, what helpless people.)

".....Eh?"

(At this kind of time, you shouldn't apologize, but rather give thanks.)

".....Ah, that's true, thank you."

(Then, continue destroying the enemy. The battle still continues.)

"I know. Then, I'm going."

After receiving the destruction of such a giant explosion, the twisted monster seemed as if it hadn't weakened.

"It's truly extraordinary..... but, I won't let you destroy anything more."

This city's miserable condition was all because Lævateinn was here doing something.

It wasn't very clear whether the monster in front of her was the same as Lævateinn or not, but at the least they were companions.

Then, it was an ordinary thought if she believed that they could do the same things.

"Let me destroy you!"

She roared, and Nina once again flew towards the monster.

She readied her iron whips in order to release Raijin.

She blindly, honestly, and straightforwardly ran towards her target in a line, not even looking to the side. She knew that this was the only thing she could do, so she charged.

It was complete faith in the one she had obtained these teachings from.

This was Raijin.

This was a fool's strike.

If she turned her head, terrors might be waiting there, but to Nina who knew all of this, this choice was a choice better than all of the others.

A charge and then destruction.

This was the embodiment of Nina's iron will.

But.....

(Nina, Nina.....)

Nina who was advancing rapidly heard someone calling.

In this kind of situation it couldn't be Felli talking, Psychokinesis power couldn't do this.

Then who was it?

No, she actually didn't need to think at all.

"Schneibel."

(Yes, Nina, wait a bit.)

It was communication through En.

Communication that didn't use sound to convey information could realize a conversation even during the current high-speed movement.

(If you use your full strength here we will be very troubled. Please hold back some of your power.)

"That's too relaxed....."

(This isn't the only thing that has fallen from the moon, and more accurately this is more of something like a leftover.)

"What did you say.....?"

(The people you know who can reach the end are about to land here. Those are the enemies you should truly fight.)

Nina didn't know what Schneibel was saying.

"I don't know what's going to happen either. You're right."

Who knew what this battlefield would become. Everyone's fates would be concentrated on this battlefield, and in the end one of the sides would be left.

For the ending that this world should have, Nina fought now.

"You said before that you didn't know, so why do you understand now!?"

(Because the moon has shattered.)

Schneibel was very calm towards Nina's intense questioning.

(I can see myself the things being released from the moon. That is the result of a battle.)

"What?"

The result of a battle.

That phrase made Nina have an extremely nasty premonition for a moment, and a chill went up her spine.

(Your strength should be exerted again when those things fall. Right now please think only of becoming more familiar with that strength, and control yourself to keep from wasting too much energy.)

"But, considering that-!"

(You need not worry, the things being released from the moon aren't only evil things.)

Facing the anxious Nina, Schneibel said this to pacify her.

(That thing should be said to be the final trump card of the people of Grendan.)

Trump card?

Wasn't that Leerin?

Falling from the moon?

(You understand.)

After those words, Schneibel's presence gradually faded.

"Damn!"

The conversation stopped.

But, her charge still continued.

Her consciousness returned before her, and her slightly blurred vision once again became clear.

She had already gotten close to the monster, and grasping iron whips in her hands, Kei elevated and ready to explode outwards, she could no longer stop.

The charge was the same. Other than swing the iron whips at the target, there was no longer anything she could do to stop the charge right now, and she couldn't even stop her feet.

It was this kind of a foolish strike.

She had to try to control something that she could only release, that was Schneibel's meaning.

Her heart felt that it was a bit difficult to give up on the Kei bursting forth and flooding into the sky.

The sensation she felt from her iron whips hitting the target was also a half-satisfactory feeling.

The explosions appeared continuously like before.

But, their might was greatly inferior to the ones before.

(There's minor damage to the aboveground portion. Can you control it?)

Felli was only making a dull status report.

But this made Nina feel as if she were being sarcastic, and she tightened her lips.

Unexpectedly, she wasn't supposed to waste too much energy.....

"Really!"

But even so, she had to fight.

Other Heavens' Blade successors also began moving.

Nina coordinated with them, and once again readied her iron whips.

On the moon, underground..... Really, what was happening?

Nina's consciousness was as if attracted by two gravitational fields, paying attention above her head and below her feet.

A red streak flew out horizontally.

It went through Leerin's gaze.

She knew what this was.

It was blood.

The spraying blood quickly turned into a mist because of the vibrations of the battle. It became a residue that brought a metallic aroma to the nose.

In a place a bit distant from Leerin, Alsheyra stopped moving.

Only her back could be seen from here, but Leerin could still understand that the flesh near her right shoulder had been cut and dyed red.

Leerin had been continuously watching the entirety of the battle .

The Queen had been wounded because she hadn't been able to completely avoid Lævateinn's strike.

But, this wasn't only because she hadn't been able to completely avoid it.

It was because the Queen had been trying to surpass Lævateinn's speed of fighting.

In other words, it wasn't because she hadn't evaded, but because she couldn't evade. That was the true reason.

"......This is troublesome."

She didn't moan from the pain at all. Rather, Alsheyra used the light attitude she always had to speak.

"Uh."

Layfon's voice came from above, and his external Kei descended from the sky.

Lævateinn who had originally been trying to take advantage of the opportunity and draw closer to the Queen once again retreated and pulled back the distance, and Lintence who had predicted this movement used the steel threads to attack.

But, nothing had any result.

Never mind the external Kei that Layfon had compressed and released, even Lintence's steel threads that had predicted the opponent's next step and released an attack were avoided.

Her methods of evasion before had always been momentarily separating and recombining the area where she was going to be attacked, letting the attack seem to pass through her body. But now she no longer needed to use these methods.

She predicted the chokepoint of the steel thread attack and avoided it.

What was going on?

The conclusion was very clear.

"Could it be that in such a short time she already surpassed us?"

Though this was Alsheyra talking to herself, it was the truth.

Lævateinn was becoming stronger.

"That kind of thing....."

Layfon murmured after he landed.

In such a short time, Lævateinn's fighting power had increased.

In the current situation they could only think.

"......Though we have no idea how she did it."

Lintence also spoke.

"But it's certain that a price was paid for it. Her movements are different from before."

"Yes. It feels that she's avoiding all of our attacks. She's already stopped using that method of letting the attack pass through her."

"Has she given up on her regenerative ability and raised her movement ability?"

"It might be that."

"In that case, we just need to hit her to possibly get rid of her."

"Yes, but that's only after we hit her."

"Hm."

Layfon and Lintence talked as they moved at high speed, and then once again rushed at Lævateinn.

The two of them had already accumulated a degree of fatigue, but hadn't gotten anything that could be called an injury. They dodged the attacks of Lævateinn who was far faster than them as they carried out their counterattacks.

But even so, the Queen who was even stronger than the two of them seemed as if her movements were a bit hindered.

Why would there be this big of a difference?

Was it because of the difference in battle experience?

Leerin had heard that because Alsheyra was too strong, she had almost never gotten the opportunity to enter the battlefield. In that case, her battle experience was certainly far from the Heaven's Blades successors who constantly fought, that was for sure.

But, what about Leerin?

If battle experience had such an effect on the battlefield, what about Leerin?

If Leerin also entered the battlefield, would she fight even worse than Layfon and Lintence?

"That kind of thing....."

She hoped she could say it wouldn't happen.

Actually, thoughts of how to move in battle had already become images and surfaced in Leerin's mind. While watching Alsheyra and the others fight, she could think of how she should act in that kind of situation.

But, was that enough?

Perhaps the things Leerin thought of were only theory after all?

If things truly became like that, then why had Leerin stayed here?

For what reason had she come here?

No, Leerin was very clear.

She was very clear that Layfon and Lintence couldn't win against Lævateinn.

If this kind of battle continued they wouldn't win.

Given the reality that they couldn't come up with a killing strike , Lævateinn would in the end surpass these two in technique.

In other words, the two would die.

In order to guard against this, the Queen was here, and Leerin was also here.

She was only here in order to fight with Lævateinn.

But, hadn't the Queen been the first one of the two to fall into trouble?

The strength contained in the Queen's body was particularly similar to the strength in Leerin's body, and that meant that the Queen was the person other than Leerin who was most suited to fight against Lævateinn.

But, the Queen had been the first of the three to be entangled by the shadow of death.

Didn't that overturn everything that Leerin had thought about reality?

Leerin couldn't win either?

Didn't that mean that the fate resting on Leerin's shoulders would in the end lead to her defeat.

"That kind of thing!"

Unconsciously, something similar to rage spilled forth.

No, she could fight.

Crushing her heart's weakness, letting the pain she felt become alertness, she returned to her confidence.

"I can do it!"

She told the others loudly.

No, that was the truth.

To ask why.....

She could clearly see Lævateinn's movements.

She was confident that she could stop Lævateinn's attacks.

She trusted that she could be faster than Lævateinn in terms of speed.

If I go fight, I can win.

That was the only thing she could trust.

That was the only thing that was a fact in this world full of things she didn't know.

That was the truth for her who stood in this world filled with anxiety.

"This is something that no one other than I can do."

Even if Layfon had come, even if he fought, this wouldn't change.

So, in this kind of place and time.....

"Leerin!"

At the same time as Leerin tried to step forward.

What stopped her was a word from Alsheyra.

"Your promise."

Alsheyra looked at the surprised Leerin, wearing a smile.

"Your Majesty....."

It was a gentle rebuke with a smile.

"You haven't forgotten, right?"

After saying this, the Queen moved.

The bleeding had already been stopped.

All that was left was the residue that lingered in Leerin's nose.

The promise.

The scent of blood and that phrase made Leerin's boiling thoughts calm back down.

That promise was one she had made with the Queen when they went underground together.

"There's something I want to ask of you."

Alsheyra had spoken with her ordinary leisurely tone.

"What?"

What would it be?

At this kind of time, what would the Queen speak to her about?

"If we fight, will you let me go first?"

"Eh?"

"Leerin can watch from the side."

"W, What's going on?"

"Nn~"

Seeing Leerin who had become panicked because of her unexpected words, Alsheyra scratched the back of her neck while playing with her hair and continuing to speak.

"How should I say it, although it's a bit rude to Leerin....."

"Nn....."

"From the start, I thought of doing it alone."

"Eh?"

"Because I never would have thought that Leerin would become like this. Ah, though I didn't know that things would have become like this during my lifetime."

"....."

"Either way though, I also thought of that."

"Yes."

"What I would do if that kind of thing happened while I was alive."

"......Nn."

"At that time, I thought of doing it alone. It wasn't important whether the Heaven's Blades were gathered or not, and even if they were gathered they might not be as strong as I."

"...................Nn."

"I was always, always awaiting the time that I had been thinking of, to go fight alone."

"............Nn."

"So, suddenly having to fight as two, telling me to battle cooperatively with someone, I completely never had that kind of thought in my mind at all, and never believed that things could be completed smoothly."

"....."

"So..... can you let me fight alone first? If alone isn't enough then I'll ask for your help."

".....Will you really ask?"

"Of course, I don't want to die either~"

After saying this, Alsheyra smiled.

She had always smiled.

"If that still isn't enough, then I'll think of a way to grab her, and then you can finish off the both of us."

"I don't want that."

She hated those words.

"I don't like it either."

Alsheyra still smiled.

But, that definitely wasn't a smile from her heart.

Her eyes definitely didn't smile.

If things truly developed into that kind of situation, Alsheyra would do it.

Though she had always seemed like a troublesome person, she would only truly do it because she was like that.

Because if she weren't leisurely, her heart wouldn't be able to endure it.

So, she took a carefree attitude to everything.

Everything.

Even her own life and fate.

Making one feel that she felt everything was meaningless and would throw everything out in order to carry out the burden of Alsheyra's bloodline.

Maybe she could only do this to obtain freedom.

Because she had met Leerin who was in a similar position, she now understood this.

So, Leerin actually thought of refusing.

"Alright? Promise me~"

Saying this, Alsheyra raised her pinky and extended it.

She wanted to use a little kid's method of promising.

Though she couldn't say that she hated it.

It seemed like she had always wanted to do this, as if she had dedicated her entirety since she had been born as Alsheyra Almonise, and so Leerin replied.

Truthfully, she wanted to ask to fight together with her.

But she couldn't say it.

The unmoving Leerin thought this.

The battle still continued.

Alsheyra clashed with Lævateinn from the front, and Layfon and Lintence guarded her from the sides.

Circumstances had become like this very naturally.

But, Alsheyra wasn't in control of that situation, and more accurately it should be said that Layfon and Lintence had brought it about.

Though the chaotic energy spread all over the battlefield was mostly all released by the Queen and Lævateinn, the ones who tried to control the flow of battle were indeed Layfon and Lintence.
.....

It looked like that from a distance.

Was that okay?

Hadn't Alsheyra said that she wanted to fight alone?

What did that promise mean now?

"Because, Layfon and the others don't know about that promise.
....."

Yes, Layfon and Lintence couldn't have known about that promise. Because that promise was a promise between Alsheyra and Leerin, Layfon and others definitely wouldn't know.

But, was this okay?

Leerin stood there, and if only Leerin complied with the promise, would Alsheyra be satisfied?

Would she be able to keep the promise between them?

"Um....."

That kind of thing..... wasn't possible.

Then what should she do? Destroy the promise with Alsheyra? Would she enter the battle?

"If I enter....."

She understood.

Leerin knew what she could do.

She could fight like a Military Artist.

She could fight better than a Military Artist.

Even being better was enough.

Because existing inside Leerin's body was the factor of the man Airen who was known as the original Military Artist.

A being known as an abnormality in the world of Lævateinn and the others.

A being that could fight on even terms with Lævateinn.

No, a being that could defeat her.

"If it's me!"

Leerin shouted.

She shouted, and this time she truly wanted to advance.

Her hand was filled with Kei, and the Kei was incredibly compressed to about the size of her pinky, and then let out.

Its trajectory was straight.

It passed by Alsheyra's side, heading for Lævateinn's body.

Seeing through the extraordinarily high-speed battle, reading the opponent's next actions, and then releasing a Kei bullet with these foundations.

Leerin believed that it would hit, in line with her thinking.

But, that was wrong.

"Ugh!"

Lævateinn's figure wavered like a mirage, and disappeared.

An afterimage?

"Oh no....."

She had been too focused and overlooked her movement.

"Where is she....."

Above.

The question and answer appeared at almost the same moment.

But because of that 'almost', there was still a gap.

That short gap would become a deadly gap in an extraordinarily high speed battle.

When she had adjusted her line of sight, Lævateinn's almost expressionless face was already too close.

It seemed like an incarnation of death.

What about Alsheyra? Because the shockwaves from the Kei bullet Leerin released had affected her posture, her movement had been impeded.

What about Lintence? Though there were steel threads there, because Lævateinn had created vibrations when she moved, his speed of engagement had been slowed.

What about Layfon? He was in a relatively far location. Though it was only relatively far.

"......Ah."

Lævateinn's expression was already in front of her.

But, things hadn't ended.

There were still things she could do.

Leerin's right eye.

Her eyepatch naturally fell off. Exposing her pupil to the chaotic air underground gave it a slightly numb feeling.

But, it was enough.

There were still things she could do.

She moved.

Leerin could feel the pressure in her right eye.

In the next moment, changes were produced in her vision.

In order to protect the girl that had always been sleeping, her vision became thorns thrusting towards the aggressor.

The poison on the thorns would make one fall into an eternal slumber.

Luring one into the world of dreams.

Letting one be assimilated into the world of Airen.

It meant sending something back to the moon.

Those thoughts that her thinking couldn't even catch up to flashed through her mind, but they produced effects.

Countless small spheres appeared.

They looked like glass balls.

But, they were harder than glass, and clearer than glass.

Like eyes.

No, they were eyes.

Imprinted with a ring of thorns, Leerin's right eye.

In other words, these were Airen's eyes.

Countless eyes appeared, and then fell.

No, they were repelled.

"What....."

Her confidence in victory also dissipated at the same time.

Receiving the poison of her vision, Lævateinn should have become tiny particles. Though she who possessed limitless regenerative ability could block it, the current Lævateinn couldn't use all her strength to do that.

Things should have been that way.

As if she had rushed through the spheres that were sent scattering around, Lævateinn appeared.

"Why!?"

Leerin shouted.

But, there was no reply.

Time slowed as if it were cut into small pieces as Lævateinn drew closer.

The expressionless her seemed like a messenger of death telling them of their demise.

Her thinking was overcome by doubt and became murmurs. There was a sound of metal being cut.

New thinking was brought out by that extraordinary sound.

The deathly scenery had been completely wiped clean by a slash filled with thick Kei.

Leerin was very clear what this was.

A portion of Lævateinn's figure had disappeared.

The penetrating light cut through the place where Lævateinn had been earlier, piercing into the earth, and then cutting into it, opening up a hole. She feared that this would pierce all the way through the outer ground of the city and then explode.

The light of an explosion came from the hole, and then abruptly disappeared. Several regenerated metal beams had blocked this place from the outside world.

Then, Leerin's vision was shaken once again and turned to a distant place.

The figures of Alsheyra and Lævateinn who had begun fighting again at some unknown time moved farther and farther away.

Steel threads moved as if wanting to create a wall between Lævateinn and Leerin.

What about Layfon?

He was there.

".....Eh?"

For some reason, he was running with his arms around Leerin.

He was carrying Leerin.

The scene became farther and farther, and Alsheyra's figure became smaller and smaller, and the originally petite Saya seemed even tinier.

Was she being sent somewhere away from the battlefield?

"No!'

Back to herself, Leerin shouted loudly.

"No! Let me go back!'

"Not right now!"

Layfon replied.

"Calm down! You're just forcing yourself!"

"But!"

It could indeed be that, and she could indeed have broken the promise with Alsheyra. Her sudden attack might indeed have failed.

Her right eye's power might also have been avoided by Lævateinn.

"But, this is something only I can do!"

"Maybe that's true!"

Layfon's shout drowned out Leerin's.

"But you're only forcing yourself!"

"Eh?"

"Though I don't know what you're thinking, the enemy has already completely seen through your actions."

Layfon's feet stopped, and the two of them were already in a place quite far from the battlefield.

"She only moved after she knew about your attack."

"How could that....."

Leerin wanted to deny Layfon's words.

But, she had truly almost been killed.

Leerin's external Kei bullet had been avoided, and her right eye's poison had been resisted.

"That kind of thing....."

Then what should she do?

The fact that her attacks were of no use threw Leerin into disarray.

She didn't know what to do.

"But, but..... we can defeat her with this."

She had thought so.

"I have some related memories that naturally flowed into my brain about fighting with her like that. Though it didn't determine a winner, we'll definitely be able to defeat her that way, I only attacked with that confidence."

Those were memories belonging to Airen.

Memories belonging to him that had entered her mind through her right eye.

Though it was only a fragmented memory, he had also fought that way.

"......Though there's still a bit that's unclear."

Hearing Leerin's words, Layfon's face sank. He was looking for the words he should say. But he seemed unable to find the suitable words to comfort Leerin, and became anxious like ants on a hot plate.

But he still took a step forward.

This was because of that hand that had slapped him on the shoulder. [2]

That sensation made him calm down slightly.

"Leerin, that, that person in the past? If he also fought like that..."

"Nn."

"Remember how he had to deal with her in the end."

"Nn....."

Leerin couldn't say anything.

It was indeed as Layfon said, but Leerin's determined confidence was unrelated.

"But....."

"But the opponent also avoids and defends, so maybe if we hit her there will definitely be results."

"....Layfon?"

"Her Majesty also seems to be being stubborn for some reason."

"Stubborn..... But-"

"Leerin?"

"But! We're fighting! We're only who we are for this day..... Her Majesty and I!"

"....."

"Compared to me, Her Majesty has always thought that way since long ago! Resolving everything by only relying on herself, always thinking of facing everything alone!"

She had been born and raised in order to combat the crisis facing the world, always having that expected of her.....

But she wasn't complete.

Leerin had inherited Airen's right eye.

"We were originally born into this world to finish everything, so let us finish everything!"

Who had she screamed out for, was it a scream expressing Alsheyra's feelings in her place? Was it Leerin's own thoughts? Even if she continued to think she understood less and less.

"Leerin....."

Layfon was confused.

Leerin exhaled, moving her gaze away from his body.

".....As expected, it would have been better if Layfon hadn't come."

She didn't want Layfon to see her like this.

"Because it's too embarrassing."

Being pressed hard by the enemy, losing her strength, and always saying strange things.

"What's embarrassing, it's fine."

After Leerin deliberately looked away from Layfon, he said this.

"Layfon?"

"As long as you're safe, even if it's embarrassing, anything's alright."

Layfon continued speaking.

"Actually I'm the one who's embarrassed. I was always confused, troubled, and nothing went smoothly.. After I was defeated here, I originally thought of starting over in Zuellni, but that didn't go smoothly either....."

"That's not....."

"But, even so I can't give up. There should be things even I can do. There will also be things I want to do."

"Layfon."

"There are things that even I can protect!"

"Layfon!"

"There's no reason anywhere that I cannot protect my family!"

"!"

When the two of them had said goodbye, Layfon had said similar words.

At that time, Layfon had also given others the same feeling.

Now was the same.

But, was it truly good to give off that feeling?

She would become anxious.

"But....."

"There's no buts."

Though she didn't know what to say, the word leaking out was only the beginning of doubts, but Layfon had already stopped it.

"I know Leerin is having a hard time. But right now we're not just betting our own lives. It's the life of all of Grendan, the lives of everyone at the orphanage.

"Nn."

"If we can work together with everyone, things will definitely go smoother. Leerin."

"....."

What Layfon spoke about was completely correct, but she couldn't quickly respond.

But, what was going on?

That anxious feeling that sprang forth was sandwiched between other feelings.

What..... was that feeling?

It shouldn't be anxiety.

It wasn't anxiety, and though it was a strange feeling, Leerin felt it.

"Leerin.....?"

"Nn, sorry. I understand....."

She still didn't really understand what the feeling truly was.

But, there would be a day when she would definitely understand it.

Moreover, that day wasn't far.

".....Do you have any thoughts?"

"For the moment."

"Ah, in that case....."

She would trust him this time, Leerin thought.

Leerin felt that time was of the essence.

She had to look carefully at the feeling on the other side of the anxiety.

Because time was of the essence.

If she kept waiting for the true nature of that feeling to appear, then perhaps.....

Layfon returned to battle.

Leerin watched his back slowly move away, but couldn't focus well.

Her right eye was hot, and her vision was filled with blood. What her right eye wanted to show her wasn't reality, but something else.

The blood in her vision endlessly increased, and there was something on the other side of that red color.

Black, deep, side..... it seemed like it was a space vaster than could be imagined.

"What..... is this?"

Leerin murmured.

But because of it, her voice didn't reach her own ears. Her eardrums couldn't even pick up the sound of battle anymore.

The soundless space continuously spread out. Just looking at the size of the space that she could see through the film of blood made her feel chills up her spine.

Maybe..... she thought.

Right now, was she connected to the moon?

Was this the world on the moon?

In that case, what a cold, lonely world it was.

Just as Leerin thought of these things.

"It's not that bad. As long as you're here, time basically doesn't have any meaning."

She heard that kind of response.

"Ah, right, you only saw this through me. Nn.....? Then wouldn't it be strange for you not to be able to see the scenes that I see? How is it. What should I say, how are your initial thoughts on seeing this space?"

"Who, who are you.....?"

Leerin reflexively asked back.

But, she was already clear on the answer.

"Nn, your voice reaches over, it seems very smooth. But it seems slightly late. Though it's a decision I made, it won't certainly be carried out so smoothly. Ah, that's also the final method of that person. We can talk about the causes later."

"Th.....that....."

"Ah, sorry. But we don't have time now to talk leisurely. Hurry up and finish the urgent matters, and you can relax later."

"Eh?"

At that moment, Leerin's hand moved by itself.

Her right hand was extended forward.

Her fingers opened, as if she were asking for something.

Leerin didn't say anything.

But even so, something appeared in Leerin's hand in the blink of an eye.

"Eh?"

Seeing the thing her hand was grasping, she was surprised.

An expressionless black-clothed girl was watching this thing appear from afar.

Though she was expressionless, she was a bit surprised.

Her expression seemed like she didn't understand why he had done this.

A gun appeared in Leerin's hand.

It was a gun that would feel too large if gripped single-handedly, but it was very easy to hold.

No, to the current Leerin, it wasn't anything strange.

What was strange was, it was obviously the first time she had held this pistol, but for some reason there was a familiar feeling.

"Come, all that's left is to pull the trigger of that thing."

The voice said this.

There were quite a few surprising things. But, if she didn't think about these, the current situation and the previous were similar.

Carrying out an attack using the gaps produced by the three-person battle.

Just like how she had been already defeated before.

"Don't worry, that thing isn't an idiot, it won't let you lose again."

"That....."

"Trust in your companions."

"....."

Hearing the word 'companions', Leerin lost her words.

It was like that.

Layfon had also said he wanted to fight together.

If she only trusted in him, she could pull the trigger.

Leerin focused her mind on the battle before her.

Leerin nodded her head.

Seeing that, Layfon felt that he had already reached the goal for which he had come here.

Of course, that wasn't saying that he had already overcome the crisis before him.

But even so, he couldn't hide the joy in his heart.

Layfon who had once again returned to the battlefield felt his body become lighter.

"Layfon, how's Leerin!?"

"No problems!"

To Alsheyra who asked loudly without any concern, Layfon loudly replied back.

"Then it's okay."

If she had been injured what would have happened?

He feared it just from imagining, but right now he was facing an even stronger enemy with the Queen.

During the period when Layfon hadn't been there, the battle had become back-and-forth.

But even so, the fatigue that could be felt from Lintence's face was even stronger. He hadn't left for very long, but this battlefield really took a heavy toll on the mind.

Layfon and Lintence crossed gazes.

If they used words to converse, then regardless of how quiet their voices were, there was still the possibility of being heard by Lævateinn.

So the important things were completely communicated with their gazes.

In order to lure Lævateinn into a trap.

Though a soundless battle meeting could only confirm the status.

Could they continue?

Leerin's response was a yes.

What about Layfon?

Right now Layfon had the Adamantium Dite in his hand.

Though it had been a last resort, Layfon had lost the Shim Adamantium Dite in order to save Leerin just now. The slash filled with the Kei of Composite Blast had pierced through the wall all the way to the outer portion of the city.

He feared that the Dite had also exploded at that time.

Losing the Dite that he used the most smoothly out of the three Dites - even if it could be called a last resort, had also been a mistake in Layfon's judgment.

But right now he didn't have time to regret.

He could only go on.

Layfon also responded yes.

After that.

The battle continued.

As expected, the Adamantium Dite was still heavy.

There was a difficulty the moment he moved and attacked in the current situation.

If it were only Layfon alone it would be alright, but in order to coordinate with Layfon, Lintence also had to make similar modifications to his movements.

The Sapphire Dite restored to a sword, and the Adamantium Dite restored into steel threads.

If he just changed their use, he could return to his movements from before for the moment.

But.....

External-type Kei, Composite Blast variant - Compound Sendan .

Release.

Facing the external Kei heading towards her, Lævateinn who had originally slipped away chose instead to strike it down.

Instead of avoiding the slash flying towards her, she struck it and offset its power.

"Damn."

The Kei that he had added to the slash really was too weak.

But, that trick had been seen through.

The balance of battle had crumbled.

Because of Leerin running away just now, Lintence had expended a lot of power, and Layfon had lost one of his weapons.

The fatigue on Alsheyra's face was also becoming more and more clear.

On the other hand, what would Lævateinn do? It couldn't be seen from her expression. But the dust on her cheeks had become thicker.

It wasn't clear whether or not this could represent the degree to which she had expended her energy.

Right now, when the balance of the battle began crumbling, wasn't a good opportunity for them.....

That was Lævateinn's judgment.

To Layfon and the others who had expended their combat power, the current situation was one where they had to maintain and where they were forced to find a way to turn the tables in the blink of an eye.

That was the current situation.

So, if there were action, it would have to start from Lævateinn's side.

And, Lævateinn began acting.

It came.

At the same time she crossed blows with Alsheyra in the front, she avoided Layfon and Lintence's attacks. Layfon and Lintence were acting right now in order to maintain the conditions.

Lævateinn would destroy those conditions.

Lævateinn who caught the Queen's fist used that momentum to jump to the ceiling.

Pursuing the path of her leap, steel threads and external Kei flew over.

Lævateinn turned to avoid those attacks, falling to the ground, and descending in front of Layfon.

She had judged him the easiest to take down among the three.

"Tch!"

Kei continuously flowing out from him, Layfon made preparations to engage.

If he traded blows head-on, Layfon would probably be pummeled in a moment. Layfon focused on parrying her attacks.

In that time, Alsheyra and Lintence also responded to the changes in the battlefield.

Steel threads thrust straight for the place Lævateinn was descending to.

But, after their thrusts were avoided, she stood on top of the steel threads.

She ran on the steel threads and closed in, but it made a gap in her movements to catch Layfon.

Layfon also responded.

Roar Kei.

Since a point attack would be avoided, then use a wide-scale attack.

Though it was a bit hurried, and moreover he couldn't realize destructive power like Savaris. But still, the vibrations released still shot out with Lævateinn as the center and destroyed the surroundings.

But, Lævateinn's figure had already disappeared from there.

The second he had prepared to release his Kei technique she had noticed his attempt and evaded.

Where was she?

Right side.

Not relying on his senses, but rather on the changes produced in the steel threads when she jumped off them, relying on the reflexive judgment his mind made.

But, the speed of Lævateinn's reflexes was also superior to Layfon's.

When he noticed, she was already in front of him.

Layfon swung the blade of the Sapphire Dite upwards to engage Lævateinn.

Lævateinn's fist struck Layfon's attack.

In the battle of strength between the blade and the fist, the blade lost.

The blade of the Sapphire Dite broke down, and the fist pushed aside the pieces as it drew closer to Layfon.

His death drew near.

But, his side had also concealed a deadly trap.

They still had a plan.

Those things appeared in Lævateinn's vision during an opportune moment.

From Layfon's left and right, they appeared, moving as if they wanted to cover Layfon and then attacking Lævateinn.

Steel threads.

Layfon's steel threads.

He had been hiding the Kei of Composite Blast for the current moment.

He had been preparing this trap since long ago.

"Yaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!"

Accompanying the roar, the speed of Kei rose.

External-type Kei, Composite Blast variant - Sougenkyouku Houraku.

The fist still continued moving forward, closing in on Layfon.

As Lævateinn was gradually covered with steel threads, the fist was also entwined with steel threads.

Would the fist reach Layfon first, or would the steel threads cover it, stopping her movements first.

The balance of life and death seemed as if it would tilt at any time.

The fist covered with steel threads was.....
...in front of him.....

Bang!

"Guah!"

The attack hit his face.

If he were any further forward his collarbone might have been broken apart. Layfon let his body fly out from the momentum.

Layfon flew through the air while forcibly restoring his blurred vision.

He still lived.

And Lævateinn?

The steel threads had succeeded in covering her. If it weren't that way, then Layfon's body would have already been in an unrecognizable condition before he was sent flying.

And moreover he didn't know how long the steel threads could hold for..... Even in this situation, he had no time to rest.

His stockpiled Kei of Composite Blast was poured into the Adamantium Dite one after another.

He quickly released his Kei technique, and explosions chained together continuously, the pressure endlessly increasing.

Everything inside that pressure would be crushed and destroyed. This move was one of the best techniques that Lintence possessed and used.

"Go!"

Layfon shouted out. Then, his back came in contact with the formless wall that Saya had created, and because of the collision he was almost unable to speak.

Of course, Layfon also knew that just this wasn't enough to defeat her.

She was only pummeled in the pressure of the explosions for a moment.

The cocoon of steel threads was torn apart.

Along with the flame that sprayed out, Lævateinn's figure appeared. Her face was completely burned black.

But, she was still fine.

But, there were still no results.

External-type Kei variant, Soungenkyouku Maou.

There was still Lintence.

The steel threads he released tried to recapture Lævateinn who had escaped from the crumbling cocoon.

They bound her.

She was once again pulled into the cocoon.

Brought into the hands of the devil in hell.

Lintence's steel threads repaired Layfon's cocoon that Lævateinn had torn, and made it stronger, even stronger.

The light of explosions once again penetrated through the steel threads.

The Kei of Layfon and Lintence had multiplied, and the force of the explosions far surpassed what the two had expected.

"Ugh....."

It wasn't only Layfon who was unable to endure the recoil of the blows.

Lintence's face showed a painful expression.

The light of the explosions passing through the cocoon gradually increased, and finally everything that passed through became pure white.

"Guahhhh....."

Even so, it couldn't defeat her.

There was some resistance trying to tear the cocoon.

No, the cocoon was torn, and that thing appeared.

Lævateinn's hand.

The heat that overflowed from the tear made the faraway Layfon feel as if his skin was being burned.

"How..... Can I let you escape!"

His entire body was tormented by the burning flame.

By the heat he had produced himself. If he stopped raising his Kei, it would probably disappear.

But, Layfon wouldn't stop.

Not only Layfon, but Lintence wouldn't stop either.

They struggled against the oppressing strength of Lævateinn who tried to tear the cocoon.

Layfon listened to the abnormal sounds the Dite made, pouring the Kei of Composite Blast into it while ignoring those complaints, and saw it.

The figure of Alsheyra running towards them.

Her hand grasped a spear, the strange spear that she had cast out in the beginning, the spear housing the energy of an Electronic Fairy.

She thrust out the spear that she held.

The reason she didn't choose to throw it was because she had made the determination to definitely not miss.

"Haaaaah!"

Alsheyra also made a battle cry.

Seeing her figure, Layfon endured the pain of the recoil while he thought that the moment had finally arrived.

He had finally waited enough for this moment.

The moment when everything would end.

The annoying thing called fate.

It was annoying to those who had been chosen as well as those who hadn't, and this battle that was called fateful was finally about to end.

It would end in the next moment.

Right now he definitely couldn't relax his guard.

He definitely couldn't release his steel threads.

With difficulty, Layfon endured the long moment that seemed to want to torment him to death, waiting for Alsheyra's spear to arrive.

Waiting for the moment that she arrived.

Layfon felt that the Queen's speed was abnormally slow, because the intense pain taxed his nerves even faster.

Was this because Layfon had relaxed? Because his persistence hadn't made it to that moment?

No, it wasn't.....

The Queen still advanced.

The final moment closed in.

Heat roasted his entire body and blows tried to tear the chains of steel threads.

Because of this, intense pain was produced.

Because of these, Layfon hallucinated.

The final moment would definitely come.

Everyone would definitely be able to see the future that should arrive.

As long as he persisted right now, it was certain.

Alsheyra ran.

She held a spear in her hand, running into the chaotic heat produced by the white flame. She ran straight to the cocoon woven by Layfon and Lintence.

Running towards Lævateinn.

The spear tip brought an earnest desire for the end.

Was this Alsheyra's desire? Or was it a simple reflection of Layfon's weakness?

The spear tip wasn't distorted because of the heat, and instead dispersed the surrounding heat because of its powerful momentum.

A space without heat formed inside the flames, guiding Alsheyra's continued advance.

At that time, an abnormality occurred in the cocoon.

By the side that wanted to resist the future.

The cocoon was torn strongly.

The figure of Lævateinn who appeared from inside was no longer the Lævateinn that Layfon knew.

Perhaps due to a response to the high temperature, a foam-like thing covered her entire body. And this foam-like object continuously dissolved and regenerated due to the high temperature, becoming black and white.

Lævateinn destroyed the cocoon, trying to reach her arm out as if wanting to touch the air.

She wanted to escape.

"I won't let you escape!"

Layfon shouted.

This was a cry to increase his already tormented mind.

An encouragement to himself in a tough situation.

Towards the fear he felt of losing and being liberated.

The cocoon of steel threads changed.

Not only Layfon's, but Lintence's as well.

The pressure inside the cocoon was completely released outwards, producing strong heatwaves.

Layfon ignored the heat, as the Kei pressure that expanded before them dispersed it.

He ignored his scorching skin.

Ignoring the pain, only looking at the target before him.

There was only one thing he could do.

That was to keep Lævateinn from escaping.

The steel threads grabbed Lævateinn's legs. Afterwards, they bound her lower half.

Even if her body were split into pieces she wouldn't necessarily die, so there was a reason to keep her entire body from escaping.

Layfon thought this.

He feared that his thoughts were correct.

Lævateinn tried to do something to deal with the steel threads stopping her from escaping.

She turned the foam-like thing covering her arms into a blade.

It became a blade targeted at herself.

She wanted to abandon her lower half.

She wanted to escape by splitting herself.

But, Lævateinn didn't do that.

Was she hesitating?

Had the heat deprived her of her thinking ability?

Regardless of what it was, the spear point had already arrived.

Alsheyra tread the final step.

Releasing the thrust.

The spear tip that had gathered all of her strength thrust at Lævateinn.

Before she was pierced, her blade swung to parry the spear.

The two made contact.

Clashed.

Locked.

A victor had to be decided here..... Fear emerged in the heart of Layfon who watched all of this.....

Another person emerged.

Her name emerged.

Her figure emerged.

She would end everything.

That ending still hadn't been changed, and this was what Layfon wanted to change the most if he could.

That kind of thought was probably only produced in Layfon's uncomfortable heart because he had been excluded by something like fate.

But, right now wasn't a time to mind those things.

Right now wasn't a time to mind the course of events.

If everything wasn't ended here, there would be no future.

"Leerin!"

Layfon called out.

If the battlefield were tilted in one side, then it could produce an opportunity for confrontation.

But right now it wasn't tilted in either direction, and right now was an incredible opportunity.

He didn't know whether his voice reached or not.

Right now he didn't have the energy to turn his vision over. In order to maintain this deadlock, the cocoon of steel threads definitely had to hold.

He didn't even have the strength to shout.

In that short moment, his call and his words mixed with the sound of alternating explosions and light.

Because of the impact from the Queen's spear, Lævateinn had been shown from under the foam-like thing, and inside was her figure which had been completely stained everywhere by dust.

Could it be that Lævateinn didn't have limits?

That kind of fear sprang up in Layfon's heart.

No, impossible.

She had been weakened by the Heaven's Blade successors, and Layfon and Lintence had weakened her a decent amount. Alsheyra as well. She had been continuously depleted inside the anti-regeneration trap that Saya had prepared for years.

She definitely had limits.

Moreover, she was already close to them.

Her limits were almost up.

And as expected, a light brought her to it.

"Ah."

That sound finally leaked out of Lævateinn.

Layfon felt that he had been liberated from that moment, and the flow of time returned to normal.

"Guah!"

The recoil of being released made Layfon fall to his knees right there, and his Dite fell from his hand, the falling Adamantium Dite losing its shape like material that had been scorched black.

Because of the heat and the use of high-intensity Kei, pain wracked his entire body.

But, right now wasn't a time to neglect the situation in front of him because of pain. Right now wasn't a time for his consciousness to be unclear.

Things had finally become like this.

The scene about to arrive was either hope or despair.

He definitely had to witness everything with his own eyes.

She still vaguely remembered the attack that pierced her body.

"Ah."

She leaked out that kind of sound.

That was because the apparatus that controlled her voice had been struck.

She also remembered what kind of strike it was.

But, that kind of strike shouldn't exist here.

No, it couldn't be like that.

In the battle deep underground, perhaps the situation was already in its final developments.

Since she couldn't see or feel the sky from here, perhaps it had already happened recently.

Then, was he here?

Her investigation function ended in a moment. A linear strike from her chest all the way to her back. Three multiple-joint bones were in pieces. Two systems of multifunctional muscle tissue had been torn apart, and control of her lower body had been lost.

Problems arose in her central control core, and nine control functions of her entire body had disappeared.

Her function came close to completely stopping.

In that kind of situation, Lævateinn looked behind her.

He was there, wasn't he?

He.....

Over there was a girl.

The wind of the battle blew the girl's skirt, and it wasn't the appearance of someone in battle, nor was it the posture of someone in battle.

It wasn't the face of someone in battle.

But, it was a fighting expression.

A face holding eyes of strong determination.

It wasn't him.

But, her hand held his pistol.

His reincarnation.

Perhaps, a replica of him.

A fake.

A girl.

But, his fighting willpower was the genuine object.

But, it wasn't him.

It wasn't a fighter.

But, it was someone fighting.

Truly contradictory.

It broke reality.

But, nothing had broken.

She was still there, with a gaze full of determination.

She had something Lævateinn didn't.

A mechanical imitation.

An organic imitation.

Wasn't that the difference? Were they different there?

Was that the thing that Lævateinn hadn't been able to obtain, but that girl had obtained?

The answer was.....

Hurry, answer.

Tell me the answer.

Tell me the answer.

Tell me the answer.

If it could be conveyed.

If it could reach here.

The answer.

The answer.

She wanted more answers.

What she should do.

What she could do to reverse this situation.

In her battle procedure there were no methods regarding avoiding this situation.

Then was there an answer in the battle experience that she still hadn't organized?

She searched.

In order to obtain the answer.

In order to know an even more correct answer.

In order to find a way to break open this situation.

A scene went through her mind.

Or perhaps, if she were a person, it would have been called a light bulb going off.

Since she hadn't organized the battle records, it should be a record from not too long ago.

She had invaded Grendan, and fought with the Heaven's Blade successors who possessed extraordinary fighting power.

What had they done?

Hopeless before Lævateinn's fighting power, how had they dealt with it?

These records.....

Give these records.....

When the records were being recreated, they stopped at an image.

It stopped after she had invaded Grendan, in the place of the first serious battle.

It was two Heaven's Blade successors.

They hadn't had the answer in their battle.

But the scene stopped there.

On their hands.

On the image of two Heaven's Blade successors fallen on the ground, with their hands overlapped.

The two hadn't died at the same time.

They hadn't done that before they died.

But, at the end when they met death together, the one who had died first had seemingly replied to the longing of the one who died second, and overlapped their hands.

Pulling them together.

Why?

A new query.

She was searching for the answer.

But, was this a problem.

It was far too.....

"Hands....."

If she reached out her hand..... If she could link hands together.....

Then, could she be happy?

But, where should she reach her hand to?

Would there be anyone who would hold that hand?

Would anyone pull her hand?

Would anyone's hand overlap with hers?

"So.....So.....Sa- ma..."

She knew that she wouldn't have that kind of ending.

That sort of ending would no longer appear.

But, even so.....

Was there anyone, who could hold that hand.....

"Mas.....ter....."

That hand.

Who would.

Things became black.

Her vision and her thinking ability.

The activity of her core was already drawing close to stopping.

Was there anyone.

Was there anyone who would.

Was there anyone who would come.....

Anyone.....

"How truly heartwarming."

The irony in that speech made something inside Layfon's heart tremble.

He felt a feeling like loathing or perhaps rage.

He had started seeing it at some time.

The voice came from a black cat.

"......I think that it's better this way."

Leerin replied with that.

Leerin's hand was holding Lævateinn's.

Though he felt extremely confused at a black cat talking, his fatigue was already near its limits right now, and his wounds were extremely serious.

A pistol was under Leerin's feet, a pistol that felt too large for her to hold.

A bullet from that pistol had defeated Lævateinn.

But, since when had she had that pistol?

She didn't seem to be carrying Dites.

Though he longed for the relaxation brought about by their final victory, right now the most important was still to use internal Kei to treat his wounds. In order to prioritize treatment, he didn't care even if a black cat was speaking or if Leerin had gotten a pistol at some time.

Layfon treated himself while helplessly looking at the strange post-crisis situation in front of him.

"Is that kind of tenderness necessary? Isn't it because of this mechanical doll that you ran into this kind of trouble?"

The black cat spoke.

"Isn't it because of her that you were unable to live like a normal person?"

"......But, she can no longer move. Then shouldn't she be already dead?'

Leerin spoke while holding the hand of Lævateinn who had stopped moving.

Lævateinn no longer moved.

Fallen on the ground, with a large hole opened on her body, motionless. No blood flowed, and though she was dead, she seemed too clean, feeling like it wouldn't be too strange even if she started moving again at some time.

But, Leerin didn't think of destroying her body completely because of this.

Because she had the outer appearance of a human.

Because they had been companions living together in the Academy City in the past.

The hate for her enemy that battle had inflated disappeared along with the end of the battle.

All that was left was only the emptiness brought by the disappearance of those feelings.

The black cat replied to Leerin's question.

"Nn, yes. To express it a bit more poetically, she's dead as a doorknob. If we want to express it more mechanically, then her function has been completely destroyed."

The voice and the cat's movements weren't connected, that kind of contradiction made Layfon feel a bit queasy.

"......Do you hate that person?"

"......I remember saying so before, right?"

"I seem to remember you saying something like letting me see the answer."

"Maybe it was like that."

"Then can you let me see the answer?"

"Didn't I already show it to you? A fake can't be the same as the genuine article."

Because of the queasy feeling produced from the black cat talking, Layfon lowered his head.

He had a sort of extremely odd feeling.

It wasn't only Layfon who felt that.

"If you make the wrong choice, everything will return to zero, I hope you can understand that point again."

"You!"

Leerin got mad and shouted out at the black cat's words.

The next moment.

"It's not only this person who's made the wrong choice, right? Erumi."

A voice that didn't belong to Leerin came from Leerin's mouth.

It was a man's voice.

A low and masculine voice.

Even Leerin who had made that kind of voice covered her mouth and widened her eyes.

"Only knowing the value of something after losing it, that's something that everyone experiences. The question is whether it can be reclaimed after losing it. You know that pain as well, isn't that right?"

".....You really said something amazing."

Was it only the black cat who didn't feel surprised?

No.....

"....."

Saya walked over accompanied by the sound of her footsteps.

"Airen..... Aien, is it you?" [3]

"Ah, yes. I'm only borrowing her mouth for a bit, I'll disappear soon."

"Aien....."

"Saya, it's almost there."

"Yes."

"Ah, I have a final thing to tidy up here, so I'll stop here."

The voice said this.

"Airen."

"No one wants to hear your grumbling, Erumi. I don't need to state the reasons, right?"

"....."

The black cat who didn't know what to say went silent.

"Then I take my leave."

"Ah.....Eh? Eh?"

After saying this, Leerin made a sound like she was practicing pronunciation with a surprised expression.

It seemed like he had already left.

Layfon watched from the side as if he didn't care. The fate that Leerin had been entangled in seemed far too complicated to Layfon. Lintence and Alsheyra hadn't had any big change in their expressions since just now.

But, it wasn't that he didn't care.

They had said Airen.

Then, that voice was the voice belonging to the origin of all Military Artists.

Also, there was something else he was concerned about.

".....The final thing?"

Could it be that everything hadn't ended yet?

"......Speaking of which, how are those helpers aboveground?"

Alsheyra said this.

That was a good question.

They hadn't had the leisure to think about this during battle, so nothing regarding them had appeared in their minds.

Had they been continuously fighting with the giant?

"Those guys shouldn't be that rule-abiding."

Lintence said this.

If they wanted to fight against an enemy who possessed strong regenerative ability, relying on normal methods couldn't resolve it, and wasn't suited to their styles.

They should have thought of some way to unleash an extraordinarily powerful blow.

But that kind of thing hadn't happened a single time while Layfon and the others were battling, it definitely hadn't.

Then regardless of which side had won, a victor was already decided.

But, the two sides had no reinforcements.

Did that mean they were still fighting?

While he was still thinking about those things, several floating lights flew towards Layfon and the others.

Psychokinesis flakes.

(Your Majesty, I'm glad to see you're safe and sound.)

(We finally got through.)

Two voices overlapped with each other.

One was Elsmau's voice.

The other was Felli's voice.

"Felli, how is the situation aboveground?"

His body hadn't completely recovered, and Layfon let internal Kei run through him while asking.

(They're still fighting on this side.)

"Eh?"

An unexpected response, and not only Layfon, but the others also showed the same expression.

Lævateinn had already been defeated.

Then, shouldn't the copies making trouble aboveground also have fallen?

(It's not the giant from before.)

Felli's correction made Layfon and the others look at each other again.

Afterwards, Felli and Elsmau recounted together.

Recounting the battle aboveground.

Chapter 6 - Youngster 2

The bitter struggle was still ongoing.

"So annoying!"

Haia's impatient voice was drowned out by the noise of the battlefield.

Even Heaven's Blade successors didn't have battle experience against consecutive enemies possessing strong regenerative ability.

Even if a wound was treated that didn't mean strength had recovered. For the moment, they were in a condition where they were able to act, but their fighting ability had lowered quite a bit.

This was an evident fact for the other Heaven's Blade successors as well, making Haia's mind ease up slightly.

"Though we can't resolve the problem like this~"

Haia avoided the things like fangs that flew by.

The originally vile, twisted monster had now become a giant tower sitting in the center of Grendan, emitting an unknown atmosphere.

A somewhat nauseating, organic tower.

It changed the feeling of the environment to something different for those who were familiar with the city Grendan.

The giant tower randomly shot out teeth-like objects.

Dodging these teeth while carrying out attacks was their current battle plan.

Though it was a monotonous battle, they needed time to prepare in order to be able to release a Kei technique with sufficient destructive power to defeat that regenerative strength.

"Does anyone still have any killer techniques?"

Seeing the cut paths that he slashed out slowly disappear, Haia clicked his tongue while saying something regarding shirking responsibility.

"If I did then I would have already used them."

Claribel's voice carried weariness.

"Ah, if it were Master....."

"If I had that kind of ability at this time, I would be incredible."

Troyatte smiled wryly.

"......Though, if it were Barmelin, she should be able to do something."

"You're annoying. Go die, you dung beetle."

(Everyone's still so spirited.)

Elsmau spoke helpless words.

"Ah, even if we let out angry voices it's no use."

Troyatte ignored the thorns that the Psychokinesis brought, smiling.

"But if this goes on we can't talk about going underground to rescue them, but instead we should request them to help us."

"If that side determines a winner, then shouldn't this thing disappear?"

Haia asked a question towards Troyatte's words.

"If this thing is a leftover body of that first thing then it would probably be that way. Ah..... I can only hope."

As he put it, right now Haia could only maintain silence.

At the same time as this conversation was being carried out, the battle still continued.

Haia's slashes, Troyatte and Claribel's Karen Kei, Barmelin's cannon strikes..... various Kei techniques battered the flesh of the towering monster.

But even like this, there was no way to overcome its regenerative ability.

It seemed like they could only stop their opponent from proliferating.

"Annoying....."

Barmelin said her mantra.

Haia also thought this.

It already counted as a great help that the opponent's offensive power wasn't strong.

"How long is this kind of shitty game going to continue."

Barmelin carried out her cannon strikes while talking indignantly.

"What's that person doing?"

Her words indicated the person on a building far from the battlefield.

"I wouldn't have done something like standing in a high-up spectator position after debuting gorgeously."

"Long-winded."

Ignoring the conversation between Barmelin and Troyatte for the time being, Haia also felt a strange feeling.

The person there should be the one called Nina.

He didn't remember having much contact with her when he had been in Zuellni, but she should be a person with a strong sense of justice suitable for a Military Artist.

She shouldn't have the kind of style to spectate from afar.

".....Maybe she's playing with us?"

"It's nothing like that!"

Claribel claimed, shouting out.

"Speaking of which, you also went to Zuellni, right?"

Troyatte butted in.

"What kind of person is she? Also, how did she come here? Both you and that girl."

"That..... I don't really understand either."

"Haa..... I'll pretty much lose my energy if everything's an inexplicable thing."

"No, please don't lose your energy."

Ignoring the banter between the two, Haia grabbed the Psychokinesis flake next to him.

"I said..... do you know any clues or not~?"

The one he asked was Felli.

Her Psychokinesist self had definitely already communicated with Nina.

(If I knew then it wouldn't be annoying.)

He had originally thought she would keep silent, but he didn't think that Felli would make a reply.

But, the contents of the reply didn't make any developments in the situation.

"Really~!"

They couldn't just rely on talking right now.

Haia focused his mind on the battle.

How long would this continuous, see-sawing battle keep going for... Haia gave up on conversation, beginning to search his mind for a way to resolve this.

(What's going on with you?)

"....."

Felli's voice wasn't panicked.

Rather, it should be said that she was keeping calm to confirm any responses.

Nina kept silent.

But, her eyes didn't move from the battle.

Above her head..... Of course, her consciousness hadn't left there either.

She kept paying attention to the pieces of the moon floating in space.

More would come.

Schneibel had said this.

Things that had been closed off inside the prison of a moon would descend.

Nina's strength existed to fight with those things. Yes, Schneibel had said so.

So, she couldn't waste her strength here.

"..........!"

Nina clenched her teeth.

Nina knew she wasn't the kind of person to be content with this. Giving the battle before her to others and preparing for the next battle wasn't the kind of thing that Nina's style would do.

But.....

(Captain?)

But, it was only because of strength that the current Nina stood here, because of strength that didn't rely only on Nina.

Not only the Haikizoku, not only the Electronic Fairy that had saved her, but also the three Electronic Fairies that she had inherited from her great-grandfather.

Thinking of her great-grandfather, she couldn't make the wrong move now.

But.....

"Is this really alright?"

She asked of herself.

Why had she come here?

In order to directly face the world's crisis.

She had come for this.

So she had listened to Schneibel.

That was also the correct choice.

Necessary strength had a necessary situation to be used in. This was a natural way of thinking for one who thought about battle tactics. It was the most appropriate way of thinking for one who could view the entire overall situation.

Nina was also the platoon captain of the seventeenth platoon.

She could also do this kind of thinking.

But, even so.....

The battle still continued.

Though they were currently in a stalemate situation, in the end it would become a situation unfavorable for them.

They couldn't win against that monster in terms of power.

It was unknown when their strength would be depleted. After Layfon and the others had achieved victory underground, the battle aboveground should have been pretty much over.

No, thinking about that, then Schneibel wouldn't have told her not to act.

"So she was saying there was no reason to act?"

Even if she brought it up, Schneibel wouldn't reply again.

She didn't know whether it was because other matters had caught their attention, but none of the Electronic Fairies responded .

(Captain? How are you?)

Felli felt confused at Nina's self-dialogue.

It definitely seemed that way to an observer. But, that couldn't stop Nina.

"But, but....."

Asking.

She responded.

"Is this really alright?"

Entrusting matters to others.

Hating this more than anyone, hadn't Nina only appeared here because of that?

Hadn't she only come here because of that?

"I....."

Even if she understood what was necessary.....

Just at that time.

A fine change occurred in the battle.

The change happened from Claribel.

Her foot had slipped.

That kind of error would inevitably appear in battle. Because of the loss of focus brought about by fatigue, she was unable to correctly recognize the condition of the ground.

It was that kind of feeling.

Because of the momentum of her movement she turned in the air, and Claribel's body collided hard with the ground. Then new misfortune had befallen the otherwise unharmed Claribel.

Countless teeth shot out from the giant tower.

Though falling wasn't deadly, because of the loss of time to escape brought about by the fall, it became deadly to Claribel.

Nina's eyes caught all of this.

"Ugh!"

Before she realized it, she had already entered a state of high-speed movement.

She passed by the teeth on her path to Claribel, and moreover the shockwaves produced by her movement scattered the teeth away.

"N, Nina?"

"Are you alright, Clara?"

"Ya~ I was almost done in just now..... but what's going on?"

Was she talking about that strength, or was she talking about Nina's actions?

Regardless of which, explaining was still annoying.

"Things are complicated."

"Ah, it's the same for both of us."

Nina noticed that though the Dite in the hand of Claribel who said this had the same appearance as before, it had a somewhat different feeling.

".....Could it be that this is a Heaven's Blade?"

"It is. I always felt that I got thrown into this. Though that is the style of Her Majesty."

"Is that so."

At the same time as she spoke, teeth continuously flew down.

But they couldn't reach the place where the two of them were.

"Nina, what happened to you?"

Claribel brought up the question.

"Well, it's very troublesome to explain."

The falling teeth couldn't get close to the two of them.

When the teeth got close to a certain distance they would disappear as if they had evaporated.

Claribel knew that this was because of the Kei that Nina released.

"Instead of that, let's deal with this thing quickly."

"......But, if you don't join the battle I fear that it will drag on forever."

"......Sorry."

Regardless of what was said she would become speechless in the end, and Nina lowered her head, deciding to end things earlier .

After Nina readied the iron whips, Claribel left her, running towards the giant tower.

(Is this alright?)

Armadune brought up the question.

(Mother-sama should have told you not to act.)

"Just call it your good luck for having made me your master."

(Understood.)

Though Nina felt surprised that she could so easily convince her , right now wasn't the time to ask for the reasons.

Nina had already begun running.

"Quickly make this thing disappear. Use full power."

(Yes!)

The Electronic Fairies' voices overlapped.

Kei rushed forth.

Kei ignited.

Nina ran at high speed dragging a red streak behind her, and the iron whips emitted sparks of lightning.

The paths of the iron whips being waved back and forth were being guided to the target.

The iron whips were carried straight forward.

Raijin's charge.

The connected attack became consecutive explosions.

The blow spread throughout the giant tower, and sparks flew everywhere.

But, only this much would be the same as the first time.

"It's not.....over!"

One of the iron whips hadn't been swung yet!

Combined Internal and External Kei variant, Double Raijin.

Her left hand's iron whip followed the path before, adding another blow to the tower.

The chain reaction of explosions became even more intense.

Shockwaves wreaked havoc in the interior of the tower, carrying out destruction.

Regenerative ability was already being used to the utmost.

But, it wasn't in time.

There was a huge tilt in the balance between destruction and regeneration.

But, it still hadn't fallen.

"In that case....."

One more time.

Nina's figure disappeared, a red light appearing from another direction and closing in on towards the tower.

Double Raijin was struck.

Explosions again.

"One more time!"

She shouted, once again pulling back the distance, and at this time Nina felt something else.

She felt the flow of the strength inside her body.

She had always felt this.

She hadn't been able to control this strength.

The strength that the Electronic Fairies continually supplied was turned into Kei. Though Nina herself didn't understand, but Nina's Kei vein had fused with the young nameless Electronic Fairy, so her compatibility with Electronic Fairy energy was extremely high. She probably surpassed her grandfather in Kei conversion efficiency at the time of her decision.

But, that wasn't to say she used that converted Kei completely efficiently.

Nina herself understood this.

"One more time!"

Nina shouted.

Though she clearly knew that she didn't have the sensation of using her strength fully well, it was enough to feel that part of it had been improved.

Compared to the battle before her, this made her feel more anxious.

In a truly important battle, if she couldn't perfectly utilize this strength then it would be useless.

"As expected, taking action is better!"

One more time.

Nina spoke to herself, repeating Raijin for the nth time.

The monster was buried under the flame of the explosions, and its bulk had already diminished greatly.

"Damn, that person took away our share completely."

She heard that kind of voice.

She felt that it was one of the Heaven's Blade successors.

"Then let's at least decide the victor in the area of beauty. Barmelin, take your clothes off quickly."

"Go die! Dung beetle."

Without any reason to pay attention, Nina continued focusing her mind on controlling her strength.

The overflowing strength was gathered into the iron whips in her hands.

Leg strength, back strength..... her entire body was filled with Kei.

Accompanying the accumulation of Kei, her entire body was covered with a film formed of red light, the overflowing strength that had become red light.

"More..... I need more!"

Nina repeated her technique.

Explosions repeated.

Her running repeated.

She could gradually see the Kei flowing in her own body.

One Haikizoku.

Four Electronic Fairies.

One young Electronic Fairy that maintained her life.

Six kind of energies fused into one inside of Nina's body. Nina was the one who controlled all of them.

This was definitely the iron will that Gildred had spoken about.

So she definitely had to achieve it.

"One more time!"

She definitely had to succeed.

"One more time!"

She definitely had to succeed.

"One more time!"

As for why.....

"This is something that I can do!"

Sprinting.

This time she felt that she could do it.

The red light covering her body disappeared.

Her feet were light.

Her hands were light.

The feeling of the Kei flowing into the iron whips was light.

It wasn't because her strength had left her so they became light, as she had speed and strength right now.

It was possible!

Raijin!

There was only one explosion.

But, the scale of the explosion far surpassed the ones before.

The blow spread through the interior of the monster in a moment, and explosions occurred without anything between them that could be called a pause.

Even Nina who had released the move hadn't expected the momentum of the explosions.

"Wah!"

Because of the shockwave of the explosion, Nina was pushed back by the out-of-control Raijin, leaving her original position.

The continuous destruction that far surpassed its regenerative ability made quite large changes in the monster's appearance.

Moreover, the Heaven's Blade successors weren't fatigued to the degree that they would let this opportunity go.

"Ahahaha!'

Troyatte made a loud laugh.

"I never thought that the moment to use this thing would come!
"

He shouted this, and raised his Heaven's Blade with an outer appearance of a staff.

That moment.

The surroundings were filled with the howling of Kei.

And it wasn't the giant tower's surroundings.

It was the entire surface of the city.

"Hidden Kei? That much strength!?"

Claribel made a surprised sound.

"What, so you did have a killing move hidden."

"Didn't I say, I didn't think there would be a good opportunity to use this move!"

Troyatte looked extremely excited.

"Because it requires so much time to prepare that it feels stupid. Though I tried doing it, it was completely unsuited for actual battle..... Ah!"

Just as he was saying this, the howling Kei continued changing.

Troyatte's hidden Kei filled every corner of the entire city.

Moreover, every part contained strong Kei within it.

"Since it costs a lot of time, and moreover controlling it is extremely strange, it's really only fitting for this kill. Die after receiving this!"

Calling this out, he released the Kei technique.

External-type Karen Kei variant - Song of the Crusade.

The Kei hidden in all corners of the city rushed towards the monster.

Rushing towards it, engulfing it.

The Kei engulfing the monster became a sphere, absorbing the monster's body.

Countless spheres.

The countless spheres formed from Kei eroded the monster, absorbing it.

This relied on engulfing the monster with Kei and destroying it from the inside until none of its substance remained.

Though this kind of thing wasn't too different from the moves of the other Heaven's Blade successors.

The difference was the number.

A small portion of the Kei hidden everywhere in the city was enough to equal the strength of a Heaven's Blade successor's Kei technique.

And countless of these had appeared at the same time.

And finally the countless Kei merged into one, creating an enclosing sphere.

Various attacks destroyed the regenerative ability, and finally attacked in unison.

This was extraordinarily large-scale destructive power.

"Break!" [4]

He made a command.

The Kei contained in that sound stimulated the spheres, producing a giant vibration that shook the entire city.

It was this great of a destructive power.

The Heaven's Blade successors on the battlefield couldn't possibly go untouched.

"Woah~ It's like a festival!"

While being blown away by the wind produced from the explosions, Troyatte laughed.

"Hey, apprentice, hurry up and think of a way to deal with that talkative person."

"......Sorry, controlling that hidden Kei has probably used too much of his brain."

Claribel and Barmelin talked while they flew.

"......In the end we weren't able to end it, huh."

Haia was also being blown away, and he muttered words while watching this.

Because of the huge explosions that Troyatte had initiated, Nina was blown even farther.

"Damn!"

Nina who had originally been sent flying from Raijin's momentum was now flying even farther than the Heaven's Blade successors due to the additional strength added afterwards, and was still in the sky even now.

She flew while musing in her heart: How worthy of being a Heaven's Blade successor.

She couldn't help but think that these were the people who had stood in the same position as Layfon in the past.

"Unexpectedly..... they can do..... this kind of thing!"

Nina spoke while inspecting her body. She moved her gaze, searching for a place where she could land and carry out a finer inspection.

And then she landed.

".....Really!"

But, because of the explosions she had been blown to a place extremely far away.

(What is it?)

"Nothing!"

After replying this to the Electronic Fairy who asked, Nina once again looked towards the battlefield.

Even now, the smoke covering the monster still hadn't dispersed.

The smoke that seemed as if it grew out of the ground had a muddy color, being brought into the sky accompanied by the rising airflow, and stopping there after touching the air filter.

Along with the help of the aboveground air converter, that smoke would finally be exchanged to the outside of the air filter, but right now in this period of time visibility would not return.

".....The problem is."

At the same time as her visibility continually worsened, Nina saw the sky.

The crumbling moon still spread its remains.

"This city can no longer endure the next battles."

Destructive power of this scale shouldn't be too common in the Heaven's Blade successors' Kei techniques.

But seeing from the city's poor condition, one could notice that such Kei techniques had already happened several times.

If they didn't have the protection of the air filter, humans couldn't live.

Even in Nina's current state, it was the same.

But the city Grendan could be said to be already on the brink of death.

"But, there's nowhere to go."

If she thought about it carefully, those anxious elements would become more and more numerous. Nina gave up on thinking about them, focusing her mind on the battle that was to come.

Of course, it would truly occur.

No, it would definitely occur.

Nina was only here for this.

So, Nina calmly accepted the abnormalities happening in the sky.

Layfon heard Felli's report while running aboveground.

The moon had fragmented.

If they weren't in the current situation, he would probably have a hard time believing that kind of nonsense report.

Layfon was also concerned about other things.

That Nina had come here.

And that the battle with Lævateinn had ended.

But, the person named Airen had said that there was still a final thing to conclude.

Moreover, the moon had crumbled.

(Captain's actions are very strange.)

"Strange?"

(How should I say it, it feels like she's been stopped from fighting by someone.)

"Is she saving her fighting power?"

(You could think that way. Though she still charged out in the end.)

"....."

Nina fought with strength incomparable to what she had in Zuellni.

But, that was fine.

Layfon had also understood something after the events in that battlefield of a city, which was that something flowed in her body that was about the same as Leerin's kind of strength. [5]

So, Layfon didn't feel surprise at her suddenly becoming abnormally strong.

In the end, the problem was still why she had appeared at that time.

"What do you think?"

(It will still continue. That way of thinking is more appropriate.)

Felli had easily arrived at the current situation.

In this regard the two of them held the same opinion.

Battle would still continue.

"There's still no....."

The sound of his muttering disappeared in the middle.

Layfon looked at his hand.

There wasn't anything there.

There was nothing in his weapon belt either.

His Dites had all broken already.

(What is it?)

Though he hadn't said anything, he couldn't hide anything from Felli.

He couldn't think of how he should respond, and Layfon didn't say a word.

He maintained silence, advancing upwards.....

"Well....."

He heard that kind of voice.

On the road to the surface, Layfon stopped his feet.

After Layfon let Alsheyra and the others go first, he turned back , and there was Saya.

The black-clothed girl stood there quietly. How had she pursued Layfon and the others? Layfon couldn't picture her running with all of her strength.

"Well..... what?"

A secret existence of his hometown, Grendan. Layfon didn't know what he should say to her.

"I'll give this to you."

"This is....."

There was a Dite in its unrestored state.

Layfon was very clear as to what kind of thing it was. Layfon had once wielded this kind of peculiarly engraved thing in his hands.

It was a Heaven's Blade.

"Why....."

"Because Saya is the mother who created the Heaven's Blades."

It was Leerin. She, who had gone on ahead, must have also returned.

"The Heaven's Blades are her....."

"Yes. So, as long as she says she'll give it to you, even Her Majesty won't have objections."

"....."

Layfon's breathing stopped, and he looked at the Dite in Saya's hands.

A Heaven's Blade.

The thing that he had once taken up, and abandoned.

"Do you want it to become the way you used it before, or should I make it like what you were using just now? Which one do you want?"

Layfon didn't reply to Saya's question.

His mind was blank.

There was something in that blankness.

That was a hesitation about whether he wanted to reach out to take that Dite.

"Layfon?"

Seeing the motionless Layfon, Leerin made a puzzled voice.

"Layfon, what's wrong?"

He only needed to take it. Taking it was better.

Layfon also understood this.

The current Layfon didn't have any Dites. To a Military Artist, this was the same as losing one's method of fighting.

Of course there was the method of using one's overflowing strength like Alsheyra.

But, that way the sword techniques that Layfon had trained in until today would ne unusable. Steel thread techniques as well. The things that he had stolen in battle, learned, and made into his own techniques would also be almost all unusable.

Only by taking that Dite could Layfon use his full ability.

In that sense, the best weapon was currently in front of Layfon.

But.....

"Layfon, what's wrong with you?"

By now, Leerin who felt that Layfon's attitude was annoying had changed her tone.

Leerin was also conscious of the fact that Layfon had refused the choice of the Heaven's Blade in his heart.

"......Are you still going to fight? Or perhaps, you're not fighting ?"

"No, I will fight."

"In that case!"

"I understand."

"......This is necessary."

"It's necessary."

"Then, why don't you take it?"

Compared to Leerin who was somewhat in turmoil, Saya didn't make any response, just placing the Dite between her palms, standing straight.

Layfon's figure was reflected in her deep black eyes, motionless.

What should he say - Layfon thought of this question in his mind.

But, he couldn't think of it.

But right now he couldn't not say anything.

The other party definitely wouldn't understand the word he didn't say.

"......It's probably my own stupid commitment."

Layfon already had a conclusion, a conclusion he had made well before this, and he chose his words carefully.

"This battlefield didn't expect me. No, thinking carefully, I never experienced any battles 'expecting me' in the first place. In Grendan, there have always been many people much stronger than me."

"....."

With a serious expression, Leerin just watched Layfon who had begun speaking, but she still assumed the position of a listener.

"No battle has ever expected me. But, because of my battles, I have been able to see the results that I looked forward to. So I'm fine with that."

Though he didn't know whether he had been born here, at the least he had grown up in Grendan. Being taken in by his adoptive father, and being raised with Leerin and the others.

Because he had experienced the pain of a food crisis when he was young, he had truly longed for the special existence of a Military Artist.

Becoming a Military Artist, he began thinking of what he could do for everyone in the orphanage.

Afterwards, he had put it into practice.

"To the me from that time, Heaven's Blades were meaningless, just rather useful. Moreover, to me, the position of a Heaven's Blade was the only important thing to obtain."

If he rationally used the things that accompanied that position, then he could help more of his brothers and sisters.

He had thought this.

"And the results were as you know."

He had made too much of an effort.

Perhaps he had gone in over his head.

In the end, Layfon had been expelled from Grendan.

"Though I suffered a blow at that time, right now I've already stood back up. I've met everyone again, and made up with them again....."

"....."

Regardless of what he had experienced in between, he was thankful to Zuellni for allowing him to have his current thoughts. Layfon felt extremely grateful, and also felt thanks for Leerin who had supported him to go study in Zuellni.

But, there were still many areas that he had to reflect on.

He had failed repeatedly. The places he needed to go over again continuously piled up.

But more numerous were the things that couldn't be retrieved.

Even if he knew he had done things wrong, Layfon didn't know whether he would be able to make up these mistakes or not.

"I feel that my way of thinking has already changed."

These words were his desire originally.

He hoped that he could change, hoped that he could mature. And now maybe those desires had produced illusions in him.

Thinking of it made him feel that maybe it wasn't completely like that.

When he had been refused in Grendan by Leerin, he had originally believed that his 'maturing' had all become hot air.

Perhaps it had all been an illusion since the start.

"I have already changed. Probably..... though I don't have much confidence."

In the number of victories and defeats, in the use of external Kei , etc..... his maturing as a Military Artist was very clear.

But, his maturing as a person was hard to understand. Even if he thought of not making similar mistakes, he would still make them. In the end, he had been pushed away by the person he wanted to protect the most.

Perhaps people wouldn't encounter anything exactly the same as something from the past, but all in all, it was pretty much the same as before, only with some slight differences.

But though some things seemed similar, the situations behind them might be different.

In that case, gaining experience from the defeat was probably truly impossible..... If it wasn't the same situation, then there wouldn't be any lesson in that defeat, right?

Could his maturing be only an illusion?

Maybe it was just being repetitively cut apart, giving up, and losing enthusiasm after a few steps.

What he thought of as maturity was probably something like a magical ball of light that would jump in from somewhere else and overcome defeats.

The maturing of a single person was truly hard to understand.

"But, I don't want to repeat similar mistakes. That feeling is definite."

"......I don't understand at all what you want to say."

"Yes. I don't really understand myself."

"In that case then hurry up and take the Heaven's Blade."

"But, I don’t want to take it."

He finally said it.

He couldn't take the Heaven's Blade.

He didn't want to take the Heaven's Blade.

"Why!?"

Leerin's confusion was apparent, and Layfon's chest tingled with guilt.

That was obvious, but thinking of it was a bit strange.

"Didn't you say you wanted to fight together before?"

It was that way.

She had indeed said this.

"But, fighting together and taking the Heaven's Blade are different things."

Even if he said this, Leerin's face was still full of confusion.

She definitely hadn't understood the actions of Layfon who refused to take what was necessary.

"I am no longer a Heaven's Blade successor. I haven't thought of returning."

"I never said you had to become a Heaven's Blade successor. Don't you need a weapon because there's more fighting? So I'm just asking you to use it."

"I already- threw it- away."

Yes, he had abandoned it.

At that time, he had lost it.

In Grendan, during the battle with the monster that had covered all of Grendan.

In order to turn the situation, Layfon had thrown the Heaven's Blade away. [6]

At that time, Layfon had thrown out his hatred together with the Heaven's Blade.

He had lost it.

It wasn't like he had never done something like putting Kei into his Dite and throwing it out.

But, when he threw away the Heaven's Blade, Layfon had truly been in the mood of completely giving up on it.

"At that time because I couldn't help but fight with my adoptive father, and because of many other reasons, I was a bit angry, but now I have different reasons."

"......What?"

"Because I'm not someone 'expected' by this battlefield."

"Eh?"

"I once obtained a Heaven's Blade, but I was unable to fight with it to today. In other words, I shouldn't actually have appeared in this battlefield. The fact that I am here isn't something anyone expected."

"....."

"The ones who were expected should possess Heaven's Blades, and I shouldn't obtain one. I came here by my own means, and fought without being expected to by anyone."

"What are you saying?"

Leerin continued being confused with an unconvinced expression on her face.

"The number of people who are using Heaven's Blades has diminished. The owner of this Heaven's Blade is no longer here. Then isn't it okay for Layfon to use it?"

"That's not the same. Though I don't know whose it is, at the least that person has always held this Heaven's Blade to fight. I can't just use that person's thing whenever I want."

"But, don't you no longer have a weapon!?"

"......There should be some emergency arsenals of weapons that haven't been destroyed, if I look for them I think there should be some sword-type Dites there."

"Relying on that kind of thing can't possibly be enough in this battlefield!"

"It's enough. That's my stubbornness as well as my challenge."

"....."

"This has been my challenge all along up to today."

"How....."

Layfon knew that Leerin couldn't understand him.

But, seeing Leerin's downcast expression, Layfon still felt a sad pain.

"This is very strange."

"I know you will definitely think that way. But, I already decided."

Since the fate that had pulled in Leerin, Captain, and the others refused to accept Layfon.

"I have to rely on my own strength."

"The current situation isn't the time to say that kind of thing!"

"I understand, but....."

It was obvious that Leerin would get mad, but even so..... Layfon's thoughts still wouldn't change.

He didn't want to identify himself with those people who had been chosen by fate.

Nor did he want to add to the list of people chosen by fate.

"Since fate has refused my unauthorized conduct, then I can only do a similar thing."

"....."

Leerin went silent as if she weren't breathing.

She looked as if she were so mad that she couldn't talk.

"Because of those thoughts..... Do you want to die?"

He had originally thought that he would be yelled at, and he hadn't thought that in fact, she would have asked with an extremely calm voice.

But to Layfon, that kind of serene expression and voice was even scarier.

"I'm not planning on dying."

"But, you'll die. In this case....."

"I won't die. I didn't come here to die."

".....Felli! Are you listening!? Do you think that Layfon is truly okay this way?"

Leerin shouted to the Psychokinesis flake.

(It's not okay at all. If he dies then I'll be very troubled.)

"Then....."

(But, if we're just considering his current choice not to choose the Heaven's Blade, then I still must approve.)

".....What?"

(Just like Layfon said, we aren't expected by anyone, and could only rely on our own means to come to this battlefield.)

"Maybe that's like you say, but haven't you already come and fought with us before?"

(What kind of thing is fate - truthfully, I don't really understand , and I fear that Layfon understands even less than I do.)

"Um....."

Layfon was speechless at Felli's emotionless words.

(Assuming that there are fixed boundaries among it, then we who are outside of those boundaries should not possess those things that can be keys of fate. Layfon cannot choose the Heaven's Blade because of that sort of meaning, though he craves a strong weapon.)

"What is that....."

Layfon felt very happy that he was able to obtain Felli's support .

But, seeing Leerin's confused state, Layfon felt worried.

But right now he had to uphold his beliefs.

He couldn't go back on them.

Even if they were believed to be very meaningless things, he still had to uphold them.

Because these were the restraints put on those who had been excluded by fate.

"But, in that case Layfon will die."

(I said that I don't want him to die.)

"The things you two talk about are very strange."

(But I believe that when he dies, it will be when this battle is lost , and moreover at that time the probability of this world's destruction will be very high. I will also die at that time, and in that case, I hope to be by his side if I can.)

"Eh?"

Though it was Leerin who made a questioning sound, Leerin wasn't the only one who became speechless because of this unexpected reply.

Layfon's mouth hung open along with Leerin's.

"Felli.....?"

Layfon stared at the Psychokinesis flake with his eyes wide, but the flake only quietly released light.

He was very thankful that she had been able to come with him, and he felt very happy about that.

But, he hadn't had that kind of meaning.

No, that wasn't right.

It wasn't that kind of thing.

"You..... This....."

(By now I no longer have any reason to conceal it.)

"We weren't talking about that kind of thing....."

(To me, we were talking about that kind of thing. I'm only following my own thoughts.)

"Don't jo.....!"

Just as Leerin was shouting out.

"Ah!"

Suddenly, she clutched her face and fell on her knees.

"Leerin!?"

Layfon ran over.

"Uuuu....."

Leerin's hands pressed on her right eye.

Leerin kept moaning, continuously repeating Layfon's name.

"What's going on with her!?"

Layfon immediately turned around and looked at Saya.

But the black-clothed girl only silently shook her head.

"I don't understand either. But, there's some change....."

When Saya spoke to her, Layfon noticed that Leerin's movements had stopped.

"Leerin?"

"It's broken, evil things are returning."

From the mouth of Leerin who was lying on the ground came the voice of a man.

"Aien."

"Nn, evil things have fallen."

"What's going on?"

"You don't understand, huh. I don't know how to explain it either..... if we were there, then it would be enough to have the thoughts 'I think, therefore I am', but here that doesn't work. So only my factors exist here."

"What will happen to her?"

"You don't need to worry about that. I don't have bad enough taste to seize a female body. Nor have I shared thoughts with that

person. I only need to take the factor. The important right eye. Maybe there will be some problem, but that would only be with the body, and relying on the medical techniques here would be enough to resolve it."

"Is that so?"

"Then, see you later..... Ah, right, you over there."

"......What is it?"

Naturally, his reply was very tough.

Leerin clutched her right eye, and only her mouth still moved, and the voice of a still-unknown man came from inside.

This kind of incomprehensible situation was already happening for the second time, so he was able to be a slight bit calmer.

But, his worries about Leerin still hadn't changed. He kept worrying in his heart whether something bad would happen.

"Your thoughts aren't bad, are they? Though to us maybe you're only an obstruction."

"....."

"But we won't tell you to go anywhere because of this, and more relevantly you'll also die if we are defeated. In that case you shouldn't bring us too much worry. Though, since the one who originally kept you out of involvement was someone on our side, right now we won't forcefully add you back in."

Suddenly saying things like this also made him very puzzled.

"Just do what you want. In any case, whatever you do it won't make any problems for the feast that's about to begin."

"How.....?"

"Ah....."

Just as Layfon prepared to ask, Leerin's voice once again came from that mouth.

And then.....

"Uh..... Uuuu....."

A red liquid leaked from the gaps between the fingers pressing on her right eye.

It was..... blood.

But, this blood slid out from the gaps as if it had a will of its own, and then disappeared in moments.

Leerin's hand didn't even have any bloodstains remaining.

Nor was there any odor.

"Ah, ahhh....."

"Leerin!"

"It disappeared. It completely disappeared....."

"Leerin?"

"My fighting strength, from my body....."

Leerin's hands still clutched her face as her mouth spoke.

"I can..... no longer fight."

Layfon felt that the hand placed on his shoulder had lost its original strength.

He caught her as she fell forward.

(We'll have the rescue team go there.)

"I leave it to you."

After replying to Felli Layfon looked at Saya.

"So, what happened to Leerin?"

"Airen took away his factor inside Leerin's body in order to materialize in the world on this side. I think that's what happened. "

"....."

"She no longer has any reason to continue fighting."

".....Really."

Seeing Leerin who had lost consciousness clutching her face, Layfon didn't think of the meaning of taking that thing.

"I must go."

Saya spoke to Layfon who was holding Leerin.

"Airen is waiting for me, and I need to give him his weapons."

"....."

"I will leave her to you."

Layfon didn't know what he should say to Saya, and he could only nod his head, and then look at the figure of the black-clothed girl running over the ground.

(The rescue team is already heading towards you. They will probably arrive after ten minutes. There are people guiding them, and I'm also watching over them. Do you want to go first?)

"No....."

Layfon quietly shook his head.

"Though the battle hasn't ended, I've reached my goal of helping Leerin. So I still want to see it out to the end."

(I understand.)

Afterwards, Felli went silent.

Layfon felt a bit uneasy in this underground space with no other people.

"Well..... Felli?"

(.....What is it?)

"No, that..... What should I say....."

(Though I also thought it was probably like that, you couldn't truly have not noticed until now, could you?)

Layfon felt that Felli's words had been emphasized halfway through.

Layfon couldn't say anything.

(What's your reply?)

But, silence wasn't allowed.

"Y, yes..... sorry."

By his side was a Psychokinesis flake glinting with light.

Because of this, Layfon still felt a strong Psychokinesis pressure that made him unable to move.

He couldn't say anything.

The Psychokinesis flake also went silent.

That state continued.

"....."

Layfon lost his patience first.

".....Well."

The flake didn't say anything.

"That....."

He couldn't think of anything to say. Leerin was still unconscious. The trembles he felt from his hands holding her should be produced from breathing and heartbeats, and there was nothing strange. The sound of her blood flow didn't feel abnormal either, and she had only lost consciousness.

(And?)

As a plea for help, Layfon moved his gaze, and afterwards, the Psychokinesis flake broke the silence.

"......What?"

(And what, what do you want to say?)

"That....."

(I'm asking for your thoughts.)

"Ah....."

Yes.

"That....."

Speaking of which, he had never talked about those.

"I....."

(No, actually, just never mind.)

"......Eh? Ehhh?"

The words that had pushed through his throat were suddenly stopped, and Layfon almost fell over.

(Tell me the reply after this is over.)

"After, you say....."

(Reply to me when you're dressed neatly and in a more suitable place, instead of when you're fatigued in this kind of place.)

"O, okay....."

Layfon didn't know what to say because of Felli's words.

And not long afterwards he heard the footsteps of the rescue team.

Maybe Felli had stopped Layfon from responding because she had noticed them getting closer?

The Psychokinesis flake was silent, and Layfon couldn't know the truth.

After giving Leerin over to the rescue team, Layfon once again advanced to the surface.

Felli definitely had also seen the situation aboveground, but she hadn't told Layfon about it.

He passed through an entire hallway, and passed through an entrance that already been half-destroyed.

The sudden light made Layfon close his eyes.

Right now should still be evening.

Then what was up with this light?

Moreover it was very hot.

Was there some place that was on fire?

In fact, there were several places for which that applied.

But it wasn't the same as the heat he felt right now.

Both the light and the heat came from above.

"......What is that?"

After he got used to the blinding light, Layfon raised his head to look at the sky.

Speaking of which, someone had recently said that the moon was already broken apart.

But, Layfon didn't have time to confirm that.

Reflected in his eyes was a blazing red object.

It was flame.

Something giant that was entirely covered in flame was falling down.

That thing burned the entire sky in a deep red, and continuously descended.

"That....."

Could this be the 'remaining thing' that Airen had spoken of?

He couldn't see the true appearance underneath the light released by the flame because it was too blinding.

But the falling thing was extremely huge.

".....Maybe that thing is even bigger than the city?"

Layfon who stared at the sky spoke dully.

(Many strange responses have been produced in the city's surroundings. This is.....?)

"Is it related to this?"

(It's still unclear.)

It wasn't strange for that kind of falling thing to produce effects in the surroundings.

It would be time for Layfon to begin fighting after it fell.

But, he didn't have a weapon.

"If I don't hurry up, it won't be good....."

Layfon moved his gaze from the sky, searching for an emergency weapon arsenal.

In order to deal with a tense battle developing inside the city, and in order to guard against one being unable to fight because of a lack of weapons, there were several weapon arsenals prepared inside the city.

Because there were no records of them having been used, maybe they had already been abolished. Though Layfon had worried about this in his heart, it wasn't like that.

"....."

Layfon gathered the Dites with the markings of blades.

One wasn't enough, so he should take as many as possible.....

When he thought of this, along came the sound of the air in the sky being pressurized, and moreover the speed of that thing increased.

The flame was already not far from here.

Layfon once again looked at the sky, noticing that the flame had slightly moved farther back.

It passed through Grendan's sky, falling diagonally towards the ground.

The heat that it had brought with it when it passed over still scorched Grendan.

The thing could be seen to be clearly far away, but the sound beat intensely at his ears.

The flame disappeared in the distance away from the city, and then exploded.

Light shot out, and after a breath, sound and shockwaves assaulted Grendan.

"Ugh!"

Layfon endured the great wind in order to keep from being blown away.

The giant flame produced by the explosion continuously spread . It far surpassed the size of the city. The endlessly released light and hot flame stopped at some point.

A shadow appeared from the flame.

It was a wild beast with four legs.

A red wild beast.

Moreover, it was a giant beast.

"...!!"

The Dites that Layfon held fell down.

He didn't think of picking them back up either.

The swelling flame continued burning.

And then, the beast born from the flame began closing in on Grendan.

Its gigantic size made Layfon stop breathing.

No, if it were only size then it wouldn't be enough to make him tremble. Until now, he had fought with countless giant opponents.

Then, what was different?

What made Layfon feel like trembling?

He trembled?

He was scared?

Yes.....

The moment he saw the beast, Layfon felt some kind of feeling from its body.

After he felt that feeling, he was overcome by its size.

That was, anger.

Unparalleled fury.

The moment he sensed it, he felt that the beast housed a fury as red as flame.

No, it wasn't housed inside it.

It was the other way around.

It wasn't the beast that was mad.

It was that after the feeling of fury had reached its limits, it had become a four-legged beast.

That feeling was more accurate.

So Layfon understood.

This fury wasn't so easy to get rid of.

Until the entire world was burned, it wouldn't be gotten rid of.

Layfon had never had felt another person's emotions so directly.

As if it were forcefully tinting Layfon's feelings. Feeling this kind of tough pressure, Layfon had even dropped his Dites.

"This....."

Very strong.

Not only from the fury that he could feel.

Nor just its gigantic bulk.

Not because of the inexplicable phenomenon where the flame swelling behind its back had suddenly been stopped.

But rather, it was only because all of these factors were gathered together that Layfon thought this.

He couldn't win using this kind of weapon.

(What do we do?)

"What should we do....."

(As expected, should you lower your head and beg them to lend that Dite to you? Right now I think you can still make it.)

"Ha ha ha....."

Layfon grimly laughed at Felli's joke.

(I'm not joking.)

"....."

(Or are you going to run?)

".....I won't run."

He didn't have anywhere he could run to.

Right now he could feel the fury in the beast's body telling him that.

There was no longer anywhere to run.

If they were defeated, then that flame would begin its final expansion, and would then burn the entire world.

There was no longer any way to avoid the option of battle.

(But the situation is too unfavorable.)

"Even if it's unfavorable to us, we can't run right now."

(Why?)

At Felli's question, Layfon thought of it.

He thought of the reasons why they couldn't escape from this place.

"Though Leerin's matter is my personal battle, still....."

Still.....

Yes, still.

The battle continued.

The crisis had already involved the entire world.

The people shut out by something like fate couldn't help but fight either. They had to continue holding their ground.

Because they had been shut out, they had to fight.

"The battle after this is going to belong to us."

Nina was somewhere in this city.

In order to fight with that gathering of fury, she was confirming her determination again somewhere.

She wanted to go fight alone.

"So, we won't run."

'Even now, if you still feel that you must stand tall-!'

Layfon suddenly heard that kind of voice.

It was a voice that he felt he had heard before.

"Eh?"

At the same time, he heard the sound of wind.

He felt as if there were something hurtling towards him. When he felt that it was an inorganic object with no hostility, Layfon reflexively caught it.

"Eh?"

A second surprise.

The feeling grasped in his hand was a familiar sensation.

It was a Dite.

From its color, he knew what Dite it was.

A Dite that other cities definitely wouldn't have.

The Shim Adamantium Dite.

"That means....."

(The surrounding responses have been determined.)

Layfon felt puzzled at Felli's words.

The surrounding responses? Speaking of which, she indeed had said there were strange responses in the surroundings.

And then, the responses had been determined?

Determined, what did that mean?

(They're cities, there are countless cities in the surroundings..... Right now, they're connecting together.)

"Connecting together..... Eh?"

Layfon didn't understand what Felli was saying.

Since she said connecting, then what was connecting with what ?

The answer came through the Psychokinesis Flake.

(Yo~ It seems like you're safe and sound.)

"Sh, Sharnid-senpai!?"

(Haha, though this injection equipment was made by Harley, it's not bad. Of course, it can only work because of my godly sniping ability.) [7]

(No, no, senpai, I think that everything was brought about by relying on my skill.)

(Shut up, Harley.)

(What's the meaning of this treatment!?)

"Eh? Eh?"

Layfon was still surprised, looking at the place that the Dite had flown over from.

He saw it.

He not only saw that one, but saw others as well.

Cities.

On the other side of the tilting Grendan, he saw traces of other cities.

There was one that he was very familiar with..... Zuellni.

Moreover, Zuellni wasn't the only city.

Other than Zeullni, there were many other cities. As if they were surrounding Grendan, lining up to protect Grendan.

'We don't have extraordinary strength! We don't have their courage! We don't even have their determination!'

Layfon heard a voice.

Hearing this familiar voice, Layfon looked at the Psychokinesis flake.

(What is that person doing now.)

Felli sighed.

(Really.....)

Sharnid also made a sound as if he were seeing something funny.

'But, we no longer have anywhere to run. We have no other choice; other than facing the reality in front of us, we are permitted no other options.'

Yes.

This was Karian's voice.

'Then! Then what choice must we make on this basis? It is to fight, or to hide, only these!'

'We will not blame anyone who chooses the second option. However, however..... However, if there are people who still think that they can only stand tall-!'

Karian was making a speech.

'If you wish that you will still be able to live in this world tomorrow, then we can only choose to fight.'

He yelled.

'If you still want to try relying on yourself to grasp your own fate!'

Layfon felt that a presence responding to this voice.

There were countless presences.

Sounds of battle came from the cities surrounding Grendan.

Sounds rose and filled the sky.

(Though I don't know what's going on, it seems like something big has happened. Felli's brother is truly incredible.)

(.....Though I worry about whether he will be thought of as the greatest trickster ever.)

(Haha!)

Layfon laughed.

(Zuellni's platoons are all assembled.)

Drowning out that voice, another voice came through the Psychokinesis flake.

It was Gorneo's voice.

(The assembly of the Military Arts students will be finished soon. I hope that we can make formations with the Military Artists of other cities, can I request that you be the center?)

(Put the information-gathering in Grendan, and then let other cities make formations between each other. I will request the Psychokinesists here.)

(Understood.)

Felli replied to Gorneo's request.

Layfon was speechless at Gorneo who could calmly organize the situation here.

(Ooooh, our Military Arts head truly has fighting spirit.)

(You should also hurry up and get energized.)

(Of course I am, didn't you see me just now? My extraordinary sniping technique.)

(I just don't want to see your ability end at that.)

Dalshena was conversing with Sharnid.

Hearing everyone’s conversations, Layfon felt that the feeling of having his entire body surrounded by something was gradually ending.

He felt that his body was lighter than before.

(Layfon.....)

"Yes."

(Since they said 'us', then we will do the same.) [8]

"Yes!"

(Okay, then, leave it to us.)

"I'm counting on you."

Layfon's hand held a Dite.

It was the Shim Adamantium Dite that Harley and Kirik had manufactured.

He restored it, and readied it.

The sensation in his hand was completely the same as before.

If he had it, he could fight.

His body hurt, and his fatigue hadn't completely disappeared.

But, his soul had been healed.

He was full of fighting spirit.

'Fight, people of the moving cities!'

Voices full of fighting spirit replied to Karian's call.

Layfon also made a response.

"I'm going!"

Shouting out, Layfon flew out.

He ran to Nina who thought of fighting alone.

Translation Notes and References

1. ↑ Nina!
2. ↑ This may be referring to someone who encouraged him earlier (Sharnid comes to mind). I have forgotten a specific reference.
3. ↑ Not a typo. Saya calls him by a nickname.
4. ↑ Troyatte says this in English.
5. ↑ 'Battlefield of a city' refers to the events in Volume 18.
6. ↑ See the end of Volume 14 Chapter 5, and Layfon's ' Rumbling Sword' technique.
7. ↑ Injection equipment means whatever equipment they used to shoot the Shim Adamantium Dite to Layfon.
8. ↑ Very ambiguous. I believe that Felli is trying to express that she and Elsmau will depart to join up with the other Psychokinesists.